PERSONNEL INTERVIEWING

By

JAMES D. WEINLAND
PROFESSOR OF BUSINESS PSYCHOLOGY
NEW YORK UNIVERSITY

and

MARGARET V. GROSS
FORMERLY ASSISTANT TO PERSONNEL MANAGER
PHILLIPS-JONES CORPORATION

THE RONALD PRESS COMPANY · NEW YORK

PREFACE

This book has been written to fill the long-standing need for a thorough treatment of the aims and techniques of business interviewing in our modern industrial society. It is intended to serve as a guide for all those who are concerned with the selection of personnel and the maintenance of sound personnel relations.

In recent years, scientific research has made available to supervisors of interviewers and personnel managers many new techniques and applications of personnel interviewing. Some of these, such as the nondirective, group, board and stress interviews and the Chappel Chronograph have been used successfully in industrial personnel work. A major purpose of this book is to explain these practical and valuable developments within a comprehensive discussion of interviewing methods, and to show how they can be employed to advantage in firms of all sizes.

Part I lays the foundation for the subject by examining the basic differences between interviewees, the general duties of the interviewer, and particular difficulties he must overcome. From this general discussion of the interviewer's job, Part II proceeds to an evaluation and description of the specific methods of determining interviewee attitudes, aptitudes, and achievements. Lastly, the different types of interviews and the special purposes which they serve in industry are examined in Part III. Although the employment interview is accorded particular emphasis in this section because of its universal importance in business, full consideration is given to the other types of industrial interviews. Specific interviewing procedures throughout are evaluated according to the over-all purposes of management. Special tests and interview forms are discussed and illustrated, and a chapter on the training of interviewers

is included to help supervisors achieve best results from an interviewing program.

Much of the material contained in this book has been used in courses in Business Interviewing at New York University. The student of interviewing will find that in every case, the explanations and descriptions of particular interviewing techniques have been built upon general psychological principles.

We wish to express our deep appreciation to Professor W. J. McKeon who read an earlier version of the manuscript and advised on its organization, and to Mrs. Margaret Llano for her encouragement and constructive criticism. For their valuable suggestions concerning the subject matter, a special word of thanks must go to Professors Frank Dephillips, Carl Schulz, and Harold Cash, all of New York University. Many individuals, including members of the Personnel Club of New York, were generous in submitting forms which they have found useful in their work. We would particularly like to thank Mrs. Edith Bergstrom of the National Foremen's Institute, Mrs. Dorothy Northwood of the Standard Oil Company of New Jersey, and Mr. James H. Ricks, Jr., of the Psychological Corporation, for such assistance.

<div style="text-align: right">

JAMES D. WEINLAND
MARGARET V. GROSS

</div>

New York
July, 1952

CONTENTS

PART I

THE INTERVIEWER AND HIS WORK

PART II

TECHNIQUES OF INTERVIEWING

PART III

TYPES OF INTERVIEWS

ILLUSTRATIONS

PART I

THE INTERVIEWER AND HIS WORK

Chapter 1

PRINCIPLES BASIC TO ALL INTERVIEWS

The importance of personnel interviewing in business today can hardly be overestimated. Although the individual interview may not seem particularly significant, it is apparent that our modern industrial society could not function as it does without the thousands of interviews conducted every day on all levels of management. Consisting, basically, of an oral exchange of information and a communication of feeling-tone between two people, the interview is the indispensable method of learning, directing, and promoting the mutual understanding required wherever people work.

An interview is essentially a conversation, a face-to-face talk between two people. Of course, every talk is not an interview; interviewers are businessmen and women talking, and they have no time to waste. They must talk with a purpose—they must learn something about the other worker or his job, give directions so that the work may go more smoothly, or motivate someone. The business conversations we shall consider involve only two people; three normally make a conference. There is, of course, such a procedure as the group interview (considered at a later point in the book), but this constitutes a special circumstance, not the usual one. The two-person situation is basic, for it permits a give-and-take that is lost in all other interpersonal relationships.

The prime requirement of a conversation is the participation by both parties. If both persons do not have an opportunity to say something or do not take advantage of the opportunity that exists, the occasion does not represent a conversation—nor an interview.

The willingness of the interviewee to talk is definitely affected by the atmosphere of the interview. It is the respon-

3

sibility of the interviewer to create a hospitable atmosphere and encourage the interviewee to participate. This often requires much skill because the business interview cannot always be as enjoyable or as casual as a conversation in social life. In a great many situations, the interviewer finds that part of his function is to serve as a symbol of the company. He may have to administer discipline, discuss complaints, or inquire into the personal aspects of the interviewee's life when that person is applying for work. In any case, such duties must be performed within the boundaries of courtesy and good will.

Again, the interviewer should not imply that he is secure in his position while the other person is but a humble applicant, nor should he find a source of humor in another's bewilderment or fright. The need for creating a suitable atmosphere, even under adverse conditions, is but one of the requirements that suggest the need for training and experience. The good interviewer is made, not born.

Furthermore, a conversation should give the impression of not being hurried. This leisureliness, when injected into a business interview, may require much planning and skill. Time is always of the essence in business, but there are situations in which other factors are of even greater importance. The interview is one such occasion. It should proceed expeditiously and skilfully from step to step; when it is rushed or hurried, it is no longer an interview.

How long, then, should an interview last? Like conversations, interviews may last from a minute and a half to an hour and a half, and sometimes even longer. (If longer, however, it might be better to take a rest period and start again later.) The American Management Association inquired of sixty-five companies and found that the modal time given to preliminary employment interviews was from fifteen to forty-five minutes.[1] Other interviews, such as counseling interviews, may take even longer.

[1] *Manual of Employment Interviewing*, Research Report No. 9 (New York: American Management Association, 1946), p. 21.

The Best Uses for Interviews

Interviews are oral, not written. In this respect, they can be contrasted to application blanks, written work directions, and personnel records. All of these devices, of course, have a definite place in the communication between management and the employee. When precise information can be supplied by the interviewee before the interview, recording it on an application blank can save a great deal of questioning. Some facts, however, are not recorded and must be established in the interview. What did the interviewee do between jobs last summer? What activities were involved in the job that is described in the record as "mechanical work"?

The interview has the great advantage over any written material in that it is flexible. The interviewee, for example, may comment that he had "better take all the overtime offered or leave home." It is important to know what the worker meant by this remark, but a written statement would not permit the reader to go back and probe. The interview, however, enables the interviewer to find out that the man's wife has just bought a new fur coat, or that a baby has been born into the family, or that he has some other special financial requirements. The nature of the requirements, too, may tell a good deal about the man's character. The interview has a further advantage over written material in that people will often tell things about themselves—their hopes, ambitions, emotional attachments, discouragements—that they would never write down.

Since all interview time is doubly valuable in that it requires the time of two people, it should be used on the subject matter for which it is best fitted. The following situations are handled better in interviews than in written communications:

1. When it is desirable to obtain factual material that has not been recorded, or, if recorded, is not available.

2. When one does not know exactly what to ask for. If an accident happens we ask "What caused it?" We are looking for facts, but we do not know exactly what facts. An interview enables one to explore the situation and determine which

facts are essential. Once pointed out, the essential facts can often be verified by other means.

3. When a person is a reference point for certain information, as in employment interviewing. The applicant knows where he has worked previously, and can direct the interviewer to his previous employer. He knows where he went to school, who his references are, who his landlord or his banker is. All these people can <u>then</u> be contacted if it is desirable. In brief, the interview can often serve to locate further information as well as provide it directly. This is one of the primary functions of an interview.

4. The interview is probably the best and main source for all subjective information. What does a person like to do, what are his ambitions, who are his friends, what are his problems, and what does he worry about? Such information can give the experienced observer a good deal of information about the individual's personality which is particularly valuable in the employment and counseling situation.

Four Basic Principles of Interviewing

In order to achieve the maximum utility from the valuable form of business conversation that we call the personnel interview, the following four basic principles must be recognized and applied.

1. The interviewee must be dealt with as a person.
2. The interviewee must be oriented.
3. The interviewer must maintain good communications.
4. The interviewer must be just.

The Interviewee as a Person.—For too many years, when production plans were laid, the personnel to be used were thought of as so many units of work to be arranged exclusively according to the ideas of management. Modern management has recognized the fallacy of this thinking. A worker is not an inanimate object whose place in the plant is like that of a machine. He is not to be moved here and there, used in this way and that, without recognizing his individuality and

asking his cooperation. Neither must he be thought of as a tool the sole value of which lies in the ability to accomplish a particular end. The employee is not to be put on the shelf when he is not being used, nor discarded when his usefulness is past. Again, he is not an impersonal generality—janitor or clerk—without individuality or name. In every case, the worker must be thought of as a human individual with the complexes, moods, and ambitions to which his humanity makes him heir.

A person is not an unchanging, uniform quantity. He blows hot and cold. He is this way today and that way tomorrow. He may have lost money, lost a sweetheart, won a bet, gained a fortune. A person cannot entirely control most changes in himself even if he wants to; he is a complex mechanism, and only part of him is under control at any one time. Anyone who deals with people must recognize this fluidity. It can be a good quality, and it can be a bad one. When we don't like it, we call it inconsistency and unreliability; when we approve, we call it flexibility, versatility, even genius. The interviewer must expect that the interviewee, after he is gone, will be different from what he seemed to be during the interview. The interviewer must expect to find frequently that the interviewee has dressed up for the interview; dressed up his language, dressed up his posture and behavior, even, perhaps, dressed up his opinions to conform to those he believes will please the company.

What a Person Is. Every person to some extent resembles a solar system in which stars, planets, and satellites rotate around a center. The stars can be compared to his family; the planets, his occupational interests; and the satellites, his hobbies and friends. The center is his idea of what he, himself, is. It is an energy-producing system with the output controlled by the momentum of habits, emotional "gravitations," and "this-is-right, that-is-wrong" laws. No one part of this solar system, it must be remembered, can rudely be torn out without upsetting the balance of the whole.

It is important to remember that this organized system of personality has a place for a great many feelings and interests

which do not have a bearing on the job. The "out-of-sight, out-of-mind" attitude, when adopted by the personnel executive, often leads to his overlooking forces that exert a great influence on the life and, therefore, on the work performance of the individual employee. Emotional disturbances or disruptions can shake up a person's usual manner of living like an earthquake. If disregarded, it can cause a good man to leave his job, or, if he remains, to become a constant troublemaker.

Sometimes, if employees are thought of as things or tools, or as merely job titles, it does not seem that they could possibly have much power or influence. When the employee is considered as a person, however, it will be realized that just the opposite is true. It is, indeed, hard to tell where a person's influence ends. He has friends and interests scattered in many areas. Every interview provides an opportunity to win over the individual and to make of him a friend of the company. It must also be remembered that, while a single interview may seem of small moment, the scores of interviews conducted every day—by executives and supervisors, by interviewers and counselors—represent an opportunity to direct a great force which can operate for the good of the company or against its interests.

Dealing with an individual as a person and not as a thing is an attitude rather than a time-consuming activity. It requires, first of all, that the interviewer give the interviewee his entire attention and not treat him in a perfunctory manner. Only to pretend to listen or to respond automatically in clichés are signs of indifference that most people resent.

It is not enough, however, that the interviewer give his entire attention to the interviewee. He must bring the interviewee around to doing the same thing; they both must interview.

Motivation. Motivation refers to the reasons why people do things. Habit and hunger, for example, are the main reasons why we eat. Why does a person submit to an interview? There are two main reasons. One is the motivation that is internal to the interview itself, an interest in the interviewer

or the subject matter. The second is external to the interview and refers to the potential benefits to be derived from it.

Interest in the interview itself, as was mentioned, can be of two kinds—interest in the person and interest in the subject matter. The interviewer should, therefore, be personally interesting to his interviewee. But precisely how can this be accomplished? We must begin by observing those negative traits that repel others and widen the gap between persons. Interviewing is rather a close-up personal occupation; to carry it on successfully, the interviewer should not have any noticeable personal odor, should not look untidy, or be dirty (except for honest work dirt on a person called from a job). He should not be bad tempered, harsh-voiced, or vulgar. He should not bite his fingernails, tap the table violently, or distract attention with other nervous mannerisms.

It is very much to the interviewer's advantage to have attractive "sit-down-by-me" personal qualities. A pleasing, distinct voice, a good posture, a cordial manner, composure, a warm smile, a sincere friendliness—all are desirable characteristics. The interviewer should be a particularly good conversationalist, able to listen as well as talk. Finally, of course, the more he knows about the topic of the interview, the better he is able to hold the interviewee's interest.

An interviewer's pleasing qualities, to bring the greatest return, must be exercised throughout the whole interview and not merely at the beginning when he is trying to establish a common understanding and put his interviewee at ease. Pleasing personal qualities are motivational—and the whole interview must be motivated.

Further internal motivation or interest can be developed in the manner in which the subject matter of the interview is treated. A well-arranged interview, carried on in a way that indicates that the interviewer knows what he is about, inspires confidence and interest. A haphazard interview leads one to question the interviewer's competency.

External motivation, or the possible reward to be won from the interview, varies a great deal in different situations. In an

employment interview, the applicant is often overmotivated. The incentive of obtaining a job is so great that he is nervous, overanxious to please, and sometimes not able to think clearly.

In those situations where external motivation is lacking, the interviewer must emphasize or increase the degree of internal motivation in the interview. This can be accomplished by displaying a little extra friendliness or consideration.

Courtesy, a Motivational Tool. In considering means of showing that he recognizes the interviewee as a person and thus winning him over, the interviewer must not overlook the advantage of being courteous. Courtesy on the interviewer's part can make an otherwise unwelcome assignment, or difficult question, acceptable to the interviewee.

In the centuries that people have lived together on this planet, experience has gradually produced ways of acting that enable people to get along together easily. These approved ways, or customs, are the essence of courtesy. They represent an attitude toward people, often called the "you-attitude." They are not a separate group of actions and so do not consume extra time. Courtesy, in fact, expedites business rather than delays it. Courtesy makes different demands in different situations. The rules of courtesy for men in dealing with women are somewhat different from men dealing with men. In either case, the niceties of business are not dressed in the elaborate forms they sometimes acquire in social life.

The courteous thing to do depends upon the situation. It would be very time-consuming and dull to attempt to give directions for all interviewing occasions, but a few illustrative examples may be helpful.

Remain pleasant and matter-of-fact even under strain.

Don't carry personal gossip.

Don't be noisy, even if an argument seems necessary.

When you must correct an error, use all the tact you have.

Smooth out your moods and grouches.

Control your profanity, and make sure all your stories are good ones.

Simply stated, courtesy is a way of expressing recognition that the interviewee is a person. We are not courteous toward tools, even though we may prize them. An executive, however, can be courteous even toward someone whom he must discipline, as long as he can view this person as a human-being-in-training. In a competitive situation, courtesy calls for fair play and the recognition of the competitor as a person rather than just as a thing in the way.

Although business pressure does not often allow time or occasion for the direct pursuit of friendship, an atmosphere of friendliness expedites the job procedure.

The Interviewee Must Be Oriented.—An individual is oriented in an interview when he knows who the interviewer is and the subject matter of the interview. A telephone interview usually requires that the interviewer identify himself. Practically every interview calls for early identification of its subject matter. Just as a person may choose to enter the north, south, east, or west entrance to a large building, he may also approach a problem from a particular point of view. The particular approach to an interview problem should be understood by both parties. This common understanding is called orientation.

Orientation determines one's attention and controls the direction in which his mind works. For instance, in doing his arithmetic, a boy may see the problem:

$$\frac{14}{\underline{4}}$$

If he is not oriented to this particular problem, he will not know whether to add, subtract, or multiply. If he is oriented, he will do what is called for without even thinking of the other possibilities.

Orientation is necessary before one can properly begin to do any piece of work, or talk with another person on any topic. It is particularly necessary at the beginning, to enable the mind to start working on the right problem. The inter-

viewer should not wait to establish this necessary mutual understanding until it becomes evident that his interview partner is thinking of something else. Nor should common orientation lapse; it must be maintained throughout the whole interview. Many a bitter argument can be reduced to a disagreement between two people who do not realize that they have wandered off to different topics. "We talk together," runs the old Greek proverb, "but each one has his separate understanding."

How a Person Is Oriented. Orientation proceeds from generalization to particularization; from bird's-eye views to individual observations; from general pictures to special features. A new man on the job is oriented by being shown his work bench, told who his boss is, informed about working hours and wages. He is then given general instructions as to what his work will be, and finally, when he is ready to begin, told about a particular task that awaits him.

When an individual is oriented, he must be met on his own ground and led by associated ideas to the new project. His own "ground" may be partly a general intellectual level, or just the mental occupation of the moment. We all know what is meant by being "interrupted." It is to be asked for a sudden reorientation, without help. In orienting a person and winning favorable attention, we must attract his mind to our subject logically and persuasively. We may have to take a number of ideational steps to "bring him around" to an understanding of what we are driving at.

A good example of orientation, when it is in competition with other activities, is salesmanship. The salesman of an expensive commodity often evolves a complex strategy merely to get the other person to think with him. He will often study a prospective customer's interests and hobbies so that he can touch on these in bringing him to his point of view. A very successful salesman of life insurance once told his men: "If you expect to sell a man by an appeal to his love for his wife and child, you cannot take this love for granted, even though you know it is there. You must bring it up and remind the man of it to make it an effective force at the moment."

The problem of orientation in interviews does not usually require as much time as the salesman gives to it in his job of persuading people to buy. It does require, however, that ideas be suggested, presented, or arranged so that interviewer and interviewee are thinking together on the same topic.

Orientation May Be Partly Emotional. One of the difficulties of orientation is that it is not always simply a matter of understanding. Emotions also play their part.

An interviewer may have to conduct a disciplinary interview in which the interviewee looks upon the whole matter with bitterness, feeling that someone's influence has been used against him unfairly. He believes he is judged "wrong" because the boss doesn't like him. Or he sees the discipline as simple punishment, and does not grasp the fact that it is also training which presents a situation in which he can learn. Unless the interviewer can orient the interviewee in this situation, unless he can show him the purpose of the discipline and what may be gained and learned from it, the whole interview will probably be a failure.

Another example is an employment interview in which an interviewee comes in glamour-conscious and attempts to dazzle the interviewer, or, at the other extreme, is so frightened that he is unable to think and present his case. In such situations, part of the task of the interviewer is to help the interviewee to an emotional orientation. With the overawed applicant— a very common situation in employment offices—it becomes the task of the interviewer to put his interviewee at ease and show him that the situation is one which presents a mutual opportunity, rather than one in which he, the applicant, is approaching some hostile individual who would like to ruin him.

The Interviewer Must Maintain Good Communications.— Since an interview consists of nothing but communicating with another individual, it is obvious that the whole interview will be a failure if the system of communications does not work. In attempting to interview someone who does not speak

the language, for example, the conclusion reached will almost certainly be "it's all Greek to me!"

Communications, of course, go both ways; to the interviewee and from him back to the interviewer. But since the success of the interview is a responsibility of the interviewer, our attention will center upon his part in maintaining good communications. It is the interviewer's responsibility to have efficient "broadcasting equipment" and an efficient "receiving set" as well. The "broadcasting equipment" is primarily verbal. It is true that the interviewer can distract by an unusual appearance, or disturb by a fidgety manner, or calm by quietness. But the principal thing he does is express ideas with words. This, of course, implies the use of the right words in the right order. The right words are usually the simplest ones that will express the idea. Talk moves along rapidly and cannot be studied while in progress. Big words, therefore, are harder to grasp in an interview than when they are read in a text. Consequently, the interviewer will need an extensive vocabulary from which he can always choose the best, and the simplest, word for each situation.

The interviewer will also need to understand something about the asking of questions. There are different kinds of questions for different purposes. Some are intended simply to put the interviewee at ease, an example being: "It's a pleasant day, isn't it?" Some questions, on the other hand, are designed to elicit an answer which will organize the interview and give it direction, and can be illustrated by the question: "What has been your work experience up to the present?" The problem and techniques of asking questions and obtaining information will be considered more closely in a later chapter.

The interview is not going to end with one question, even though it is well asked. There will probably be a whole series of statements or questions. In consequence, the interviewer must get these questions into the right order and remember all the answers given. There are several methods of organizing the interview and going through it in an orderly way from step to step. These methods will be discussed in the chapter in which the patterned interview is examined.

Listening and Looking. Listening has been called the great secret of conversation. If this is true, it is certain that some interviewers have never discovered the secret. Interviewers are people too, of course, and very much interested in their own little universe. Some of them are so interested in themselves and the clever questions they are asking, that they never stop to listen to the answers. Or, if they do listen out of courtesy, they do not carefully consider the answers or examine them for their full meaning. There are a number of arts to good interviewing, and listening is one of the most important. Without careful listening and weighing of the answers given, there is little use in asking questions.

Two Subject Matters to Listen for. The alert interviewer, moreover, will want to listen to two subject matters: the manifest content and the latent content. This distinction is clearly illustrated when the interviewee says, for instance, "I feel afraid of something, and I don't know what it is!" "I am apprehensive, and I don't know why I should be." "I worry all the time." Manifestly, the subject is afraid, apprehensive, and worried; but why? What lies underneath these mental states? As the interview goes on, the interviewer will listen for cues of the latent or submerged experiences that may be causing such manifest uneasiness. As the illustration suggests, latent contents are particularly listened for by the counselor who is talking with some disturbed worker. But some latent content or reason lies underneath the manifest statements of all interviews. One young person says, "I don't want a promotion. All I want is to be left alone on my job." Another says, "All work is unpleasant; it is just that some kinds are more unpleasant than other kinds." The alert interviewer listens and searches for what is back of such statements. He tries to understand what experiences led up to such opinions.

After an interviewer has listened, he must remember the answers he has heard in order to weigh and consider them. This may be very difficult to do, particularly in a long interview. There are several solutions to the problem of memory; record forms of various kinds offer some help. But the prob-

lem of memory really is a part of the general problem of order, that is, of asking the right questions at the right time. For this reason, the problem of memory is discussed in the same chapter in which the asking of questions is examined.

What to Observe in the Interviewee. The alert interviewer will, of course, watch his interviewee as well as listen to him, in order to obtain as many clues as possible to his character. Underlying the interviewer's observations are two main assumptions: every person is a "bundle of nerves," and every person is a "bundle of habits."

There are two aspects to the control which a man's nerves exercise over his behavior. One part of this control, that directly subject to the individual's will, is illustrated when he straightens his necktie. The other aspect of this control is automatic, or autonomic, and is shown when a girl blushes furiously and is unable to prevent it. The directly controlled responses will sometimes tell the interviewer what the interviewee would like to have known or thought about himself. The interviewee may have dressed very neatly for the interview, for example, or may sit very straight in his chair. The autonomic behavior, on the other hand, may suggest to the interviewer something that the interviewee would like to conceal; a social ineptness, for example, may be indicated by undue excitement or embarrassment during the interview.

The assumption that every person is a "bundle of habits" is a way of saying that everyone has learned some patterns of acting by means of repetition. In consequence, the interviewer looks for repetitive behavior and the signs of repetitive behavior. Sometimes an interviewee will fall into a particular slouch, catch himself, and straighten up, only to repeat it again. Certain wrinkles in older people tell of repeated grimaces; others of repeated smiles. The interviewer who is interested in people and takes care to study them can often tell a good deal about a person just by looking at him.

The Interviewer Must Be Just.—To be just is to treat another person with perfect objectivity after gathering adequate knowledge about him. Objectivity implies that none of the

judge's (interviewer's) personal wishes or prejudices has affected his decision in any way For this reason, justice is traditionally portrayed as a blindfolded woman holding aloft a balance scale

The problem of justice in the interview stems from the fact that the interviewer, as well as the interviewee, is a person and subject to personal biases The interviewer, too, resembles a little solar system rotating around a center of self interest Although he cannot help this, he must become aware of the personal forces which exert an influence on him and try to control them

Justice is a requirement of practically every interview In employment and disciplinary interviews, the need is obvious It is the substance of the merit rating interview Even in the counseling interview in which he has no responsibility at all for judging his interviewee, the interviewer's attitude and the consequent success of his work will be influenced by the private and silent judgments which he cannot help making

A difficulty with injustice is that it sometimes comes camouflaged as a favor given or a favor received It often makes an interviewer feel good to give an anxious person a job, and this feeling may quiet a whisper of conscience that the person was not qualified and should not have been accepted Sometimes, also, justice or injustice is so closely associated with discipline or punishment, that there is no distinction in the interviewer's mind Some people do not like to discipline and force themselves too hard to accomplish what they consider a necessary task Others may have a sadistic trend and punish for recreation Into the balance scales go fatigue, boredom, or eagerness to get out to lunch or keep a date in the evening

Good judgment is made up partly of sound knowledge, partly of a recognition of one's feelings, and partly of clear thinking Many interviewers are short of knowledge, unaware of the effect of their feelings on their judgments, and without much ability to think clearly Interviewers, too, are human The problem of judgment and the methods by which justice in interviewing can be achieved are treated at length in a later chapter

We have seen that interviewing is a complex activity and that throughout all its many forms four principles are basic: each interviewee must be treated as a personality, he must be oriented, he must be dealt with by means of effective communications, and he must be treated justly. Throughout the remaining chapters of this book, these four principles will find constant reference. They are the foundation stones on which all good personnel interviewing is based.

Chapter 2

DIFFERENCES AMONG INTERVIEWEES

The objective of the employment interviewer is to find the
best employee for an available position. In recognizing the
fact that there will be a best, he anticipates also that there
will be a second best, and possibly a worst. In this chapter we
will consider the underlying differences among people which
make such contrasts possible and examine some erroneous con-
cepts that sometimes influence judgment.

At the basis of our contrasts we always find an underlying
similarity. This is well illustrated in the old query: "What is
the opposite of a white elephant?" The answer usually comes
after a moment of reflection: "Why a black elephant, of
course." Yet, when you consider, there is nothing more similar
to a white elephant than a black one. In reaching his decision
on the answer, the respondent utilized the same base (ele-
phant) and established a contrast on the color only. In inter-
viewing, the basis of similarity which enables us to contrast
the good and the bad is human nature. And human nature
is much the same wherever it is encountered. This funda-
mental homogeneity of human nature can be more drastically
illustrated by making another contrast between similars; be-
tween man and the anthropoid apes. The chimpanzee, the
orang-utan, the gorilla, and the gibbon are four reasonably
close relatives to man. Yet no man is ever mistaken for one
of these animals. We are so different that scientists have been
hunting for years for the "missing link."

There are a number of characteristics which indicate the
unity of the human race. Set against the background of the
basic similarities among men when compared with apes—an
upright posture, an intelligent brain, speech, and a high degree
of manual dexterity—we find an infinite number of differences

among human beings. They have received unequal quantities of the basic human abilities and have made different use of them. These differences are what make one person a good employee and another person a poor one. Our next problem, therefore, is to see what creates these individual variations.

There Are No Types of People.—A few centuries ago, when people believed in witches, they also believed that geniuses were individuals who were in some ways, not subject to the laws of nature. Such views led to the dividing of people into types like the genius type, the martyr type, the saintly type, the criminal type, the butter-and-egg-man type, the banker type, and so forth. Such a classification would provide an easy way to estimate human nature and to come to an understanding of the individual interviewee, if it were true to the facts. All one would need to do would be to classify the person into his proper type, and then attribute to him all the characteristics of other people of that type. Or the employment interviewer could simply look among applicants for the particular type desired.

Unfortunately, the method is unrealistic. Careful investigation indicates that there are no types of people. Individuals often resemble one another in one or two characteristics, such as eye color and skill in mental arithmetic. However, to assume a parallel throughout the entire range of human characteristics because of one or two similarities between individuals, will be wrong in almost every case. Even to define a standard or set up types on the basis of eye color, for instance, would be extremely difficult since there are no clear dividing lines between proximate shades.

One of the major attempts to simplify the problem of understanding human differences has been to separate the human race into a series of subraces. This was done first by the botanist Linneaus, who classified so thoroughly in botany and biology. He named races by color—the black, the white, the red, and the yellow. Many efforts have since followed, and a number of criteria (such as hair formation) have been used to classify people. None of these efforts has been completely

successful; the various human characteristics are well mixed in all the "races." In fact, the mixture of human qualities is such that there is no high degree of uniformity within any classified race. The divergences, on the other hand, are so great that we cannot consider any race as consisting of a certain type of person.

Subdivisions of the Human Race

If the human race cannot helpfully be divided into types or races as an aid to the employment interviewer, we must seek another way. Let us examine, therefore, the two major causes of differences among people: heredity and environment.

When we study the various influences of heredity and environment within the human race, the part attributable to each is not so clear. Many studies of the problem have been made, however, and these are important to the interviewer because this problem underlies the differences in aptitude and opportunity. Aptitudes are those talents that we inherit and which make us capable of learning when the environment provides the opportunity. Mechanical aptitude, clerical aptitude, language aptitudes, and numerical aptitude enable those who possess them to learn business skills. A person with good aptitude for a certain kind of work but no training or experience will often make a better employee than one with considerable training but little aptitude.

The Mechanisms of Heredity.—Our aptitudes come to us as an inherited endowment, and the operation of heredity obeys certain laws. Human heredity is passed on by germ cells carried within the body. Here, they cannot be influenced or changed by what happens to the body that carries them. There is, consequently, no such thing as inheritance of acquired characteristics. That a certain family has operated a grocery store for ten generations does not, of itself, enable the younger members to inherit more ability to run grocery stores than had the previous generations. The family might develop a grocery-store tradition and train the children better with

each ensuing generation, but heredity would not absorb the experience of the fathers and pass it on to the sons. The same is true in every occupation; an experienced father may teach his son, but he cannot pass on his own acquired experience as an inherited endowment.

The differing heredities of families and individuals have come about primarily through the mechanism of double parentage and the mixture of strains. People are born with quite different potential abilities; every individual is a new experiment of nature. All humans have the characteristics of the human race, but they have them in quite different amounts.

Environmental Influences Producing Differences in People. --There are a number of special influences, such as nationality, geography, education, and experience, which produce differences in people. A nation is to some extent a cultural unit with many environmental opportunities and restrictions operating on its people. It is reasonable to expect that a good number of national resemblances will develop among the people who remain at home and, therefore, are subject to those influences. But when people leave their native lands they may also leave many of the traits that are characteristic of it. The interviewer must, consequently, be very careful in drawing any conclusions about an individual or assigning him any national characteristics because he or his parents came from some particular country. The evidence that has been carefully gathered is very limited in support of such conclusions. It has been claimed that individuals of certain nationalities and groups make different kinds of hand gestures when talking and that many of them make more such gestures than do Americans. In a relative way, certain nationalities are known to excel, on the average, in formal education and in abstract thinking, while others excel, again, on the average, in artistic interests and mechanical ingenuity. But these differences are believed to be due to cultural rather than inherited forces and tend to disappear in a group when it is set in a different cultural environment. It is important to point out

moreover, that very few of such differences arising from national origin have ever been firmly established.

The influence of geographical location is similar to that of nationality. Both in the tropics and in the arctic regions the task of maintaining one's body temperature at normal is such a heavy physiological task that little energy is left for work and a profound difference in personality characteristics is noticeable. How much of this influence stays with the individual when he leaves a certain climate is probably an individual matter, however. At any rate, little can be said of geographical influences as an aid to understanding the individual interviewee unless the interviewer is working in the locality where such influences exert their force.

Rather than depend on any hypothetical national or geographical differences, even where there is evidence that they do exist in the native countries, the interviewer would do well to find out the particular influences that have operated on the applicant. What were his particular opportunities and particular social and economic handicaps? In the southern part of the United States, for instance, Negroes are, in general, limited in opportunity and social stimulation. Many of them reflect this by failing to develop their native talents. However, those who migrate to the North where their opportunities are greater usually show much more development of their abilities.

The Effect of Family Training. There is much evidence to show that early family training and environment are potent influences in the development of a person. The interviewer will often find himself well repaid for examining the quality of the applicant's early home. Was it a pleasant home? Was the applicant encouraged in his school work? Was he provided with suitable reading material when he was a child? Was he given the necessary materials to draw, paint, make things, and develop some hobbies? Could he bring his friends to his home?

Many people speak more freely of their early homes than might be anticipated, and, by their expressed approvals or

disapprovals and enthusiasms or antipathies, give evidence of their present attitudes

The Effect of Formal Education. The existence of our vast school system, supported by public taxes, is an indication of the belief of the average man in the value of education. There are a great many jobs for which a person will not even be considered unless he has had a high-school education. There are many more for which he will not be considered without a college education. And, before one can enter many other occupations such as medicine, dentistry, and engineering, certain degrees past the college level must be acquired.

The interviewer, even though he considers that education is nearly always an advantage, will still want to evaluate the particular training received by the applicant. Did he work hard at his education? Did he show achievement? Was the education he received well suited to the work he is now trying to enter?

The Effect of Job Training The value of job training and experience is drummed into the head of every beginner when he sets out looking for his first job Every employer seems to want experience, and none seems willing to help him get it

Experience is not only a great teacher, but also a classifier. It works to some extent to weed out the inept. The interviewer must be on his guard against assuming that everyone does as well as everyone else in gaining experience during the same length of working time. For example, when we consider a distribution of punch card operators according to proficiency later in this chapter, we will notice that the best operator was averaging between 275 and 285 cards per hour, and the poorest one, between 110 and 120 per hour. The best operator in this case was doing more than twice as much work as the poorest operator, although each had a comparable level of experience

The interviewer must evaluate experience, just as he does education Some people will work harder at getting their experience and will get more and better experience in the same length of time than other people do Even so, differ-

ences in experience and job training are two of the most important aids to the interviewer in distinguishing between one worker and another.

Kinds of Differences

Through our double parentage and the germ plasm mechanism of heredity, each of us inherits a quite different endowment of aptitudes. But through the restless moving about of our ancestors, we do not find these endowments clustered in types or by groupings. We may conclude that an individual's aptitudes are the result of his heredity and that his skills, knowledge, and habits depend further upon the opportunities given him by his environment. This is about as far as we can go; we cannot say how much of anyone's achievement was due to his heredity and how much to his environment.

Differences Between People.—Even though it is impossible to separate people's differences sharply by relating them solely to heredity or environment it is most important to examine and understand these differences. Of major interest is the fact that, although people cannot be divided into types, they differ regularly in any characteristic by conforming to what is called the normal curve of distribution. In this distribution there are a few who are very good, a large number who are about average, and a small number who are poor. This distribution of people will relate to a single characteristic, such as quickness of movement, but a person who ranks high in a distribution for quickness might rank low in a distribution for general intelligence; a lack of parallelism that was pointed out in our discussion of the attempted grouping of people into types.

An example of a nearly normal distribution curve, as found in a group of employees, is given on page 26. These particular workers were night-shift operators of card-punching machines.[1]

Since business firms usually keep the better workers and let the poorer ones go in slow times, it may be that most firms

[1] William H. Stead and Carroll S. Shartle, *Occupational Counseling Techniques* (New York: The American Book Co., 1940), p. 90.

disapprovals and enthusiasms or antipathies, give evidence of their present attitudes

The Effect of Formal Education The existence of our vast school system, supported by public taxes, is an indication of the belief of the average man in the value of education There are a great many jobs for which a person will not even be considered unless he has had a high school education There are many more for which he will not be considered without a college education And, before one can enter many other occupations such as medicine, dentistry, and engineering, certain degrees past the college level must be acquired

The interviewer, even though he considers that education is nearly always an advantage, will still want to evaluate the particular training received by the applicant. Did he work hard at his education? Did he show achievement? Was the education he received well suited to the work he is now trying to enter?

The Effect of Job Training The value of job training and experience is drummed into the head of every beginner when he sets out looking for his first job Every employer seems to want experience, and none seems willing to help him get it

Experience is not only a great teacher, but also a classifier It works to some extent to weed out the inept The interviewer must be on his guard against assuming that everyone does as well as everyone else in gaining experience during the same length of working time For example, when we consider a distribution of punch-card operators according to proficiency later in this chapter, we will notice that the best operator was averaging between 275 and 285 cards per hour, and the poorest one, between 110 and 120 per hour The best operator in this case was doing more than twice as much work as the poorest operator, although each had a comparable level of experience

The interviewer must evaluate experience, just as he does education Some people will work harder at getting their experience and will get more and better experience in the same length of time than other people do Even so, differ

that, in the fields of their special abilities, they are quickly interested and often learn by themselves. This is shown in the many studies made of those individuals who are placed very high in the distribution curve for general intelligence. One boy, known locally for a number of years as "the Columbia Genius," was doing graduate work when he was fourteen years old. He could read and write seven languages and worked higher mathematics with ease. He was larger than the average boy, good natured, and interested in nearly everything. For a time he was socially shy but guided by Dr. Leta S. Hollingworth, an expert in dealing with superior children, he gradually overcame the defect and made a sound vocational adjustment. The converse is illustrated in the example of a dull normal boy who lagged behind in school, learning little, stopping finally because he was too big to go to school any more. He lived at home, ran errands and did occasional laboring jobs. The years passed without any great change; he had never been sufficiently interested in any endeavor to try to learn a skill. He worked with some regularity at simple laboring work and did on each job just about what he was told to do.

Illness and Defect.—Everywhere along the normal curve of distribution for intelligence we find people diminishing in usefulness because of illness or defect. These defects and illnesses are of various kinds; there are those with defects—the cripples, the blind, and the deaf; the physically ill; and, finally, the mentally ill—the neurotics and the psychotics.

Most companies will have a definite policy in regard to hiring cripples, in which case the interviewer's job will be merely to determine whether the applicant can do the particular job and whether or not he has become maladjusted through his difficulty. Deaf people, in particular, often become suspicious and uncooperative because of their handicap. Where such handicapped people are studied and given vocational opportunities which they can use despite their defects, they often make very good employees.

The physically ill are supposed to be weeded out by the medical examination, but this examination is not designed to

would have a slightly higher proportion of good workers. The distribution above, however, illustrates reasonably well the proportion of good and poor workers in the community. The employment interviewer might expect to find about this same proportion of good and poor prospects among the young people who are going to work for the first time. Older workers looking for work would probably have more of the poor ones among them since the better ones would probably have been kept on their jobs. The employment interviewer must, therefore, be alert if he is to find the few particularly able prospects among the applicants he sees, and avoid employing the inferior ones that come along.

Average Number of Cards Punched Per Hour	Number of Night-Shift Operators
275–285	1
264–274	1
253–263	6
242–252	3
231–241	4
220–230	14
209–219	17
198–208	14
187–197	16
176–186	15
165–175	12
154–164	12
143–153	2
132–142	2
121–131	1
110–120	1

Differences in Aptitude.—Differences in aptitude are very, very important to the employment interviewer since they represent differences in readiness or ability to learn. Some young people show enormous aptitude for learning certain kinds of material at their very first opportunity to do so. These individuals are often better prospects for employment than better-trained individuals with less natural aptitude.

An important characteristic of people of high aptitude is

that, in the fields of their special abilities, they are quickly interested and often learn by themselves. This is shown in the many studies made of those individuals who are placed very high in the distribution curve for general intelligence. One boy, known locally for a number of years as "the Columbia Genius," was doing graduate work when he was fourteen years old. He could read and write seven languages and worked higher mathematics with ease. He was larger than the average boy, good natured, and interested in nearly everything. For a time he was socially shy but guided by Dr. Leta S. Hollingworth, an expert in dealing with superior children, he gradually overcame the defect and made a sound vocational adjustment. The converse is illustrated in the example of a dull normal boy who lagged behind in school, learning little, stopping finally because he was too big to go to school any more. He lived at home, ran errands and did occasional laboring jobs. The years passed without any great change; he had never been sufficiently interested in any endeavor to try to learn a skill. He worked with some regularity at simple laboring work and did on each job just about what he was told to do.

Illness and Defect.—Everywhere along the normal curve of distribution for intelligence we find people diminishing in usefulness because of illness or defect. These defects and illnesses are of various kinds; there are those with defects—the cripples, the blind, and the deaf; the physically ill; and, finally, the mentally ill—the neurotics and the psychotics.

Most companies will have a definite policy in regard to hiring cripples, in which case the interviewer's job will be merely to determine whether the applicant can do the particular job and whether or not he has become maladjusted through his difficulty. Deaf people, in particular, often become suspicious and uncooperative because of their handicap. Where such handicapped people are studied and given vocational opportunities which they can use despite their defects, they often make very good employees.

The physically ill are supposed to be weeded out by the medical examination, but this examination is not designed to

detect those who are well but of little vitality. In a competitive situation the interviewer can frequently take up the subject himself and determine how much the applicant knows about the requirements of a good diet, and how regular and adequate his sleeping and living habits are. There is evidence that those who eat little or no breakfast lack energy for the day's work, and such well-informed organizations as the Metropolitan Life Insurance Company offer their office workers a free meal at noon to make sure that they get one good meal a day. There is no reason why the interviewer should not examine energy factors such as diet and sleep as well as skill factors.

The neurotic individual is one who is maladjusted and not functioning well but who has not "broken down" or found it necessary to leave his work. Insofar as the work goes, in fact, some neurotics become perfectionists and excel the average employee, although they are seldom happy in what they are doing. Sometimes they are self-made martyrs and allow other people to take advantage of them. Sometimes they are aggressive or domineering and very difficult to get along with. These are the people whom the industrial counselors try to help. Their efficiency can often be increased where it is below standard, and sometimes, by skillful counseling, they can be encouraged to find the means of reaching a complete normality.

The psychotics designated in law as "insane," are seldom seen by the employment interviewer. They hear voices or see visions when none exist, or are otherwise not responsible for their actions nor responsive in accepted ways to the actions of others. Occasionally, one of these individuals is so mild, however, that he actually obtains employment. One of the authors talked with a man working in a machine shop who believed that if he crooked his finger and pointed it toward anyone, that person would fly out the window and be killed. He was very proud of this ability and talked of it a good deal, but gave constant assurances that he would not do it to one of his friends. As he was a good mechanic and attempted no other means of murder, he was allowed to continue on his job. Extreme abnormality, however, is not always easy to detect.

The personnel interviewer must maintain his vigilance in order to detect any significant, although not obvious, indications of severe maladjustment.

Differences Within the Individual.—As everyone knows from his experience, people are not all good or all bad. Within each individual there is always a distribution or range of abilities. A person will nearly always be better in some types of work than in others. Some have high general intelligence but very little mechanical ability. Some have more clerical ability than general intelligence. Some have high intellectual abilities but are so lacking in self-confidence that they cannot make use of the abilities they possess. Some have very little actual ability but a great deal of self-confidence. These variations within the individual must be studied if the interviewer is to find the applicant who is strong in the particular characteristics required by the job.

Examples of variation of ability within the individual are always near at hand. Salo Finkelstein, a "lightning calculator," was tested at New York University some years ago and observed to possess no higher general intelligence than the average college student. His ability to remember numbers and to calculate rapidly, however, was extraordinary. He could, for instance, memorize in only five seconds a group of numbers like the following:

$$
\begin{array}{c}
4693 \\
2184 \\
6701 \\
8357
\end{array}
$$

He could then repeat them without hesitation in any direction asked.

In the 1932 presidential election, Finkelstein mentally added the results of the voting in the various districts and announced, moment by moment, for one of the large radio networks, the standing of the various candidates. It is to be noted, however, that despite this incredible ability to deal with numbers, he was no better than an average college student in solving a verbal problem.

detect those who are well but of little vitality. In a competitive situation the interviewer can frequently take up the subject himself and determine how much the applicant knows about the requirements of a good diet, and how regular and adequate his sleeping and living habits are. There is evidence that those who eat little or no breakfast lack energy for the day's work, and such well-informed organizations as the Metropolitan Life Insurance Company offer their office workers a free meal at noon to make sure that they get one good meal a day. There is no reason why the interviewer should not examine energy factors such as diet and sleep as well as skill factors.

The neurotic individual is one who is maladjusted and not functioning well but who has not "broken down" or found it necessary to leave his work. Insofar as the work goes, in fact, some neurotics become perfectionists and excel the average employee, although they are seldom happy in what they are doing. Sometimes they are self-made martyrs and allow other people to take advantage of them. Sometimes they are aggressive or domineering and very difficult to get along with. These are the people whom the industrial counselors try to help. Their efficiency can often be increased where it is below standard, and sometimes, by skillful counseling, they can be encouraged to find the means of reaching a complete normality.

The psychotics designated in law as "insane," are seldom seen by the employment interviewer. They hear voices or see visions when none exist, or are otherwise not responsible for their actions nor responsive in accepted ways to the actions of others. Occasionally, one of these individuals is so mild, however, that he actually obtains employment. One of the authors talked with a man working in a machine shop who believed that if he crooked his finger and pointed it toward anyone, that person would fly out the window and be killed. He was very proud of this ability and talked of it a good deal, but gave constant assurances that he would not do it to one of his friends. As he was a good mechanic and attempted no other means of murder, he was allowed to continue on his job. Extreme abnormality, however, is not always easy to detect.

education. With the more educated, especially during working years, specially developed or used abilities assume more importance.

Following Spearman and working with a slightly older age group of college students, L. L. Thurstone developed a theory based on what he called "vectors of the mind." With the method he developed, certain primary abilities are discovered and evaluated. The primary abilities that have been most clearly demonstrated are the following:

1. Verbal comprehension—the ability measured by reading and passing vocabulary tests.
2. Word fluency—the facility in making small talk.
3. Number facility—speed and accuracy in simple arithmetic.
4. Space concept—a grasp of spatial and geometric relations. This ability is useful in mechanical and engineering work.
5. Associative memory or rote memory.
6. Perceptual speed—speed in dealing with easy material. This ability is made use of by the government worker who inspects thousands of bills daily looking for counterfeit money.
7. General reasoning ability.

The statistical work of Spearman and of Thurstone has been continued by many others, and it has been developed into a technique called "factor analysis." Factor analysis separates such a complex as business ability into its most characteristic and clear-cut parts and helps the interviewer to examine the applicant before him. The United States Employment Service made a factor analysis of the business aptitudes of over 2,000 men, most of them at the beginning of their business careers, and concluded that such aptitudes consisted of the following traits.[3]

1. General intelligence
2. Verbal ability

[3] Staff, Division of Occupational Analysis, War Manpower Commission. "Factor Analysis of Occupational Aptitude Tests." *Educational and Psychological Measurement*, V (1945), 147-55.

At Lehigh University one of the authors tested a boy who could tell almost instantly the day of the week for any date from his fourteenth year to the 1960's. He did this by obtaining the dates, day after day, by some laborious procedure and then memorizing them. His memory ability repaid him by making him a celebrity in the home for the feeble-minded, where he lived; the special attention was the joy of his life.

The employment interviewer, however, does not wish to employ applicants on the basis of some special ability unless this special ability is the principal one required by the job in question. Constant alertness is required to avoid judging a person's total ability by some one ability that happens to be displayed in the interview.

Patterns of Ability.—A great many studies have been made to determine whether a person's abilities are arranged according to any pattern. Although this work is not finished and will probably continue for a long time, it is already providing help for the interviewer. Some reasonably clear descriptions of characteristics frequently found in people are given, and some traits that often go together are known. A good description of these data is given by Anastasi and Foley.[2]

The first theory of mental pattern to be developed was originated by Charles Spearman. Making statistical studies of the different grades earned by the same children in school, he concluded that the mind has a general level of intellectual ability together with special abilities that might be either much better or much worse than the general ability. The general factor is described by Spearman as a kind of stamina or mental endurance; some people, he found, were able to continue at mental work for relatively long periods of time. Others had very little of this stamina. But, whether a person had much or little of the general factor, he still might possess any degree of the special abilities, such as musical, mechanical, or memory ability. Other investigators have found the general factor to be most important in children and people with little

---

[2] Anne Anastasi and John P. Foley, *Differential Psychology* (New York The Macmillan Co , 1949), pp 492 536.

for inspection. Although work on these problems is still going on, it is important that the interviewer be alerted to its significance, for, when completed, it will help the interviewer to understand what the words *business ability*, and *personality* really signify. Such research will enable him to direct his observations and his questions in a more intelligent and informed manner and help him determine on a tangible basis the relative abilities of various applicants to fill the requirements for a particular job. In the final analysis, it is in the differences in ability to perform certain specific business skills that the employment interviewer should be most interested.

3. Numerical ability
4. Spatial ability, i e., to grasp spatial relationships
5. Form perception
6. Clerical perception
7. Aiming
8. Motor speed
9. Finger dexterity
10. Manual dexterity

Factor analysis has been carried over to the examination of personality, and a number of the more definite personality characteristics laid out for inspection. Anastasi and Foley[4] summarize a number of studies of the Guilfords and find the following personality characteristics to be the factors responsible for the scores in most personality inventories and questionnaires:

1. Social introversion—social shyness; the attempt to keep in the background
2. Thinking introversion—a reflective, meditative disposition
3. Depression—constant worrying; frequent dejection
4. A tendency to ups and downs in emotional mood
5. Happy-go-lucky
6. General activity
7. Social leadership and dominance, or submission to authority
8. Masculinity-femininity—responses similar to those characteristics of men or women
9. Feeling of inferiority and lack of confidence
10. Nervousness, irritability, jumpiness
11. Objectivity—the characteristic of not taking things personally
12. Co-operativeness—the ability to get along with people; tolerance
13. Agreeableness—the lack of desire to fight or dominate

These statistical and factor analysis studies have probed to the depths of the mind and the personality and laid them out

The same flexibility is encountered when we consider the human situation in the interview. As an interview gets under way, a dominant, submissive, or give-and-take attitude develops on the part of the interviewee in very short order. Which it will be is determined by both personalities, the personality of the interviewer as well as that of the interviewee. Some people are usually dominant and aggressive, some tend to be passive, some are aloof, others are warm and friendly. The interviewer's personality should be such that he can arouse friendly and co-operative responses in as many sorts of people as he meets.

The interviewer will not be able to arouse adequate person-to-person relationships unless he recognizes that he, himself, is a person. That is to say, unless he has self-respect and maintains it. A simple, direct, professional way of talking and acting is called for. The good interviewer will be sincere; he will deal frankly and honestly. Any idea that he must be more clever than the interviewee and must trick him into admissions is misguided. Any attempt to bicker or argue will be met by opposition. Any assumed superiority or any uncalled-for reserve and dignity hamper the flow of information. People do not like to be talked up to or down to; they want merely to be talked to.

The responsible interviewer knows, moreover, that he is dealing with life, with opportunity or the loss of it, with success and failure. His skill and judgment, or lack of it, may have a dynamic effect on someone's career. Primarily, this sense of responsibility means that the interviewer will recognize that the simple ethics of the kind stated in the oath of Hippocrates, which is sworn to by medical doctors, is a binding requirement.

The Interviewer's Interest in People.—A human being is more complicated than any machine on earth; there is so much to learn about people and "how they tick," that a person who is not interested will be bored to death. A person attempting to master all the intricacies of engineering, when he is not interested in mechanical things, would certainly be out of place. An individual spending years as a lawyer, when

Chapter 3

THE INTERVIEWER'S PERSONALITY

What kind of a person makes a good interviewer? We can find out best by following the precedent of the employment interviewer, by taking the job description and observing the human qualities it calls for.

The interviewer's job is that of talking on friendly terms with all kinds of people. The situations and subject matters will be highly varied, but through them all the interviewer will have to apply four major principles. He must establish good person-to-person relationships; he must orient his interviewees; he must maintain efficient communications; and he must be just. There are both techniques and personality requirements for achieving these ends. In this chapter, we are particularly interested in the personality requirements.

Personality as a Factor in Dealing with People

Since the purpose of the interview is to get some reaction from the interviewee, we must consider the personality of the interviewer as a stimulus. If we reflect a moment on how differently we respond to various people we will quickly recognize the influence of personality in determining our response. We meet the "boss" soberly, respectfully, let us say. One of the secretaries we tease a little. X talks too much, so we avoid him. With A we take a slightly dominant attitude, feeling that we are the master in this area. With B we talk only of superficial things, avoiding any test of strength. With C we relax and act naturally to the occasion of the moment. There are scarcely any two persons in our environment to whom we respond in the same way.

34

sugary and distasteful. But he carried on with such good humor, gusts of laughter, and heartiness that he was a favorite. There were probably many other men in the group who would have done as much for their friends, but few displayed it so clearly. Because interviews are short, and often held with strangers, a little extra display of friendliness and helpfulness, such as placing a chair or arranging a place to write, does not come amiss.

A memory for names helps the interviewer in showing his interest and friendliness to the interviewee. If an interviewer can use the name of his interviewee easily and correctly, he has a means of personal recognition that most people warm to. Calling a person by name when he does not expect to be remembered often develops good feelings and confidence almost immediately. Mistaking a name, on the other hand, can be a source of irritation to many people and generally gives indication of a chilling lack of interest.

Some interviewers use a sense of humor very effectively in winning the cooperation of an interviewee. Humor is a very desirable characteristic when it is friendly and natural. There are people, however, who like to think of themselves as humorists and who wreak much havoc with their supposed humor. Most jokes, it is true, have to be at someone's expense, but practically never should they be at the interviewee's. The interviewer may tell a joke on himself, or on some person not present, or a joke that is dependent merely upon a set of circumstances. But it needs the abilities of a skilful humorist to take the interviewee in a light vein of humor without causing embarrassment or hurt feelings.

The Interviewer Needs Some Person-to-Person Skills.— Some of the elementary social behaviors help to keep the interview on a person-to-person basis. The interview environment requires some special courtesy skills and some conversational skills. People must be met and treated with the politeness they have come to expect in their everyday contacts, or they will withdraw and become reserved. An interview under such circumstances can never be the best.

he does not enjoy examining precedents and logical implications, would almost surely be unhappy. In the same way, a person attempting to interview who is not interested in people would almost certainly fail. There are some people so unobservant that they never know when they have embarrassed another person or hurt his feelings. Such a person may be alert enough to the workings of a machine or to the intricacies of an accounting problem, but if he has never become interested in the expressions of the human face, the shrug of shoulders, the incipient gesture of a hand he does not understand people very well, and would, consequently, make a very poor interviewer.

A consuming interest in people and a continuing curiosity about their experiences and what life means to them brings human understanding. By watching people everywhere, observing how they live, talking with them, and studying about them, the interviewer becomes an expert in human nature. That, in the final analysis, is what a good interviewer must be.

The Interviewer Must Show Friendliness.—One of the quickest ways of telling a person that we recognize him as a fellow person is the display of friendliness. Considering our desire that the interviewee talk, listen, and be friendly, we must be doubly insistent that the interviewer possess these characteristics. The interviewer stands in need of these qualities beyond the general requirements of social life because interviews are relatively short, and the interviewer's characteristics must be strong enough to work quickly. Deep friendliness and helpfulness must be there, but, if hidden behind an inscrutable exterior, they are not enough. They must be reflected in outer manifestations and surface indications. In one of the army units during World War I, there was a man who, although older than most of the boys, spent most of his spare time being friendly. He told the boys he liked them, and offered to help them if they needed help. Could he write letters for them? Did they need matches? Yes, he would gladly run an errand. Such behavior might have been a form of compensation for some inferiority feeling and become

tends to distract attention from the subject being discussed and interferes with free course of the conversation. Interviewees will sometimes avert their gaze because they are ill at ease, but the interviewer should always look directly at his interviewee when he talks.

Avoid Writing Too Much. In order to look at the interviewee in a natural manner during the interview, it is often desirable to limit writing. More attention is given to this problem later, but meanwhile let us make the general observation that the good interviewer will limit the writing during the interview by making use of rating scales, shorthand, a code system, or other devices so that he may watch the interviewee, look into his face, and talk in a natural conversational manner.

Choice of Clothing. We must keep in mind the role of the interviewer as a stimulus when we consider the matter of clothing. The interviewer may be considered best dressed when his clothing attracts no attention at all; that is, when his clothing is so suited to the environment in which he works and to his personality that the interviewee will not be distracted by it.

Obviously the clothing should be clean, neat, and well-conditioned. If any extra touch is to be added to a quiet conservatism, it should be in the little things, the selection of colors or a rosette that sets off a particular personality. Anything in the way of glamour or flash should be avoided because it makes more difficult the establishment of friendly confidence.

Qualities Needed in Orienting the Interviewee

Having examined the interviewer as a person and discussed his attitude toward his interviewee, we come to his task in orienting him. We have mentioned in a previous chapter that orientation is partly emotional and partly intellectual. Let us examine these two aspects of the matter.

Emotional orientation is most easily established between two people who are alike and who have had common experi-

There are a number of social skills required within the interview itself. One example is provided by the technique of asking embarrassing questions regarding a person's age, previous salary, or personal affairs. When such questions must be asked, interview courtesy requires that the need for such information be explained before the interviewee is expected to give his answer. Age, for instance, may be a necessary question for social security and insurance records. The skilful interviewer will also avoid direct contradictions, abrupt and imperative questions. He will not interrupt when the interviewee is talking. He will not suggest that the opinion he gives is preferable to the one expressed by the other person, nor will he take the last word on every topic. If he is interviewing a woman and wishes to light a cigarette, he will ask her permission first. These social skills which come within the area of the interview might be gathered together under the word tact.

Another group of interview skills relates to such qualities as poise and confidence. These attributes will be developed by interviewing, but they also come from other factors in one's nature, from his social life, and from his general maturity.

Posture and Movement. The posture and movement of the interviewer have a suggestive effect upon the interviewee. It will be very difficult for an interviewer to put his subject at ease if he is nervous and fidgety himself. If the interviewer sits on the edge of his chair, bites his fingernails, pulls his hair, or tugs at his collar, he will find it more difficult to win the confidence of the interviewee. A quiet, easy composure and the absence of nervous mannerisms suggest self-assurance and help to win co-operation.

Look at the Interviewee. A good interviewer looks people directly in the face. When we are at ease with our friends, we usually look them in the face as we talk to them. We probably develop the habit of understanding one another partly through interpreting facial expressions and gestures. The habit of looking directly at the interviewee not only develops a friendly atmosphere but facilitates communication as well. When a person looks down or aside while talking, it

vidual. For this reason if a shop man can be found with the necessary qualifications for interviewing, he will probably be more successful with other shop men than would someone with merely an academic training, no matter how broadminded and sympathetic he might be. In the same way a man with office experience and other necessary qualifications would probably be the best interviewer of office employees.

This principle, nonetheless, has its limitations and should not be pressed too far. It is obviously impossible to have enough interviewers to provide one similar to every applicant, or to every employee. Yet the principle can be recognized insofar as it is practicable under given circumstances. It will often be necessary to find interviewers who can be "all things to all men" and who are capable of adjusting, in some degree, their attitudes and vocabulary to the different persons interviewed. Two practices are dominant in selecting such an interviewer. One is to choose people with considerable academic training in psychology and sociology who have also acquired some business experience. The other technique is to take experienced and trained people, usually supervisors, from their work and transfer them, at least for a time, to interviewing. These experienced employees, it is thought, have the "feeling" and the language in common with other employees and will quickly come to a common understanding with them.

The primary necessity for orientation is information. Generally, the interviewer needs three kinds of information to orient his subject; (1) he must be informed in regard to the subject matter under discussion, (2) he must understand to some extent how the interviewee's mind works, and (3) he must know something of the body of knowledge held by the interviewee. The first two of these requirements depend upon training; the last depends upon the skill and alertness of the interviewer after the interview has started. Only the second and third requirements will be discussed at this point. It is obvious that, unless an interviewer understands what an interview is to be about, he cannot properly introduce the subject. An employment interviewer who does not know a good deal about the job his interviewee is applying for is lost. For this

ences. During the Second World War, when many young people were working for the first time, many concerns initiated adjustment counseling work. Most popular of these counselors were the "fatherly" man and the "motherly" woman whom the newcomers in industry recognized as familiar.

When adjustment interviewing is done on a somewhat deeper level, attempting to relieve workers of their emotional tensions, it is common practice to use men interviewers for men, and women interviewers for women. The assumption is that there will be fewer inhibitions when a man talks to a man on personal matters, and when a woman talks to a woman. One exception to this general observation is suggested; some men go easily to a woman interviewer with their troubles, as they have constantly gone to their mothers and wives for help. In general, however, except on the level requiring highly specialized training such as that possessed by psychologists and psychiatrists, the so-called personnel interview goes more quickly and smoothly when the interviewer and interviewee are of the same sex.

In employment interviewing it is often found that older women applicants do not like women interviewers, but for the same reason they are preferred in adjustment interviewing. Women interviewers understand the older woman applicants too well. Young women applicants, however, do prefer women interviewers.

These considerations suggest the valuable applications of the principle of similarity. This principle can be illustrated from the studies of marriage. Once it was thought that desirable patterns of courtship were explained by the statement, "opposites attract." Now, however, a great deal of evidence has been accumulated to indicate that the success of a marriage can be predicted on the basis of the percentage of common factors in the personalities and interests of the bride and groom. Similarity leads to understanding.

So, too, in interviewing. It is probable that a young girl would be somewhat out of place interviewing older men, as would an old man interviewing young girls. An uneducated person has much difficulty interviewing a highly trained indi-

given to getting a big ship out of dock and under way. Alertness, patience, and a certain sense of fitness and relatedness are the personal requirements for this activity. Some people never get over the habit of saying things the very moment the idea occurs to them. The interviewer must learn to be patient and hold his fire. An interview is a continuing process in which streams of thought are important. When the interviewee is going along under his own power, explaining himself and revealing his attitudes, it is usually best to let him keep going. The interviewer can hold back even a very important question or comment for a few minutes when the remark will fit better into the background of the interview.

In holding the orientation of the interviewee throughout the whole interview, a logical order of questions will help a great deal. The interviewer must not, of course, maintain any slavish attachment for a prepared order of questions or the interview will lose its conversational nature and become an examination. He must be ready to follow leads and notice whatever clues come to the surface. It is when the interviewer finds that the interviewee has stopped and is waiting to be shown the way that a prepared guide or series of questions will be useful. In these cases, the interviewer will find that a logical order of questions makes it easy for him and the interviewee to stay together. This orderly procedure and the attendant ease of maintaining orientation in the conversation are some of the advantages of the patterned interview which will be discussed at length in a later chapter.

The Interviewee Possesses a Large Body of Knowledge.—
The interviewer must be aware that his interviewee has a great deal of information of one kind or another, that this information has fallen into a certain stria or order while in the interviewee's mind, and that these ideas are active pushing things.

A great many interviews are attempts on the part of the interviewer to explore the interviewee's mind in relation to certain subjects. When this is true, the interviewer has a particularly difficult problem of orientation, for how can he

reason the interviewer must be thoroughly familiar with the job descriptions in his plant.

The Interviewer Must Know How the Interviewee's Mind Works.—There is no limit to the knowledge of psychology an interviewer can use. We cannot, however, expect him to be a trained psychologist, and we will mention but two of the most important principles.

The first of these is that the mind follows patterns of associated experiences in its activity; that is, ideas (sometimes emotionally loaded) are in some way attached to each other. The interviewee is certain to be thinking of something when he comes to the interview, and will have to be led from his own thoughts to a direct attention to the problem of the interview. This is done awkwardly and poorly by an abrupt jump. In fact, the interviewee sometimes will not follow a blunt command to give up his own thoughts and think with the interviewer. In almost all cases the principle of associated ideas should be utilized by the interviewer in leading the interviewee to a proper orientation. In cases where the interviewer knows the subject of the interviewee's thoughts and can use them as an introduction to the subject of the interview, that is ideal. When he doesn't know the interviewee's thoughts, which is usual, he does well to begin with some casual, neutral subject that is common to both of them, and then move on to the real problem of the interview. In personal loan interviews, for example, it is common practice to begin the interview with a discussion of general financial conditions, and then lead on to the interviewee's personal need.

The second principle is that it often takes a little time to move the mind from one set of ideas to another. All of us have moods and know we cannot jump in and out of the "blues" at will. A mood might be described as primarily a complex of happy or unhappy ideas. All our thoughts tend to run in groups or complexes so that many associated ideas are active when any particular complex is active. Consequently the interviewer must often expect to take a little time in establishing the orientation he wants, just as time must be

The Problem of Maintaining Good Communications

Human communication is a very old problem and has been exhaustively studied in other fields. We will do well to see what has been done here before we consider the specific field of interviewing.

Universities have been training professional workers for centuries and have gradually developed some agreements on how to do it. Doctors and lawyers can be taken as a typical example of these workers. It is uniformly agreed that these individuals must meet two broad requirements in their work. They must be technically proficient, and they must "sell their wares." The last requirement is the one that interests us now. It can be described more delicately in the expression, "they must get along with people." This requirement is similar to the idea that the interviewer must communicate with people.

The universities in attempting to solve this problem, have required a certain amount of arts training along with the professional training they give. In accordance with this principle, most medical and law schools are graduate schools. Universities that allow combined programs, so that college can be reduced to three years, require a good deal of arts work in these three years. The reasoning is this: People communicate, or get along easily together, on the bases of common knowledge and the arts of speech. Common knowledge is that which gives an understanding of customs and ways of thinking. These customs and ways of thinking are introduced to a person by means of history and folklore tales or literature. In consequence arts courses are comprised primarily of the arts of speech, of various literatures, and of history.

We cannot, however, ask for an arts degree, or a great deal of training in literature and history, from our interviewers. We must get the same easy communication skills by building up general knowledge that is more common to business and working people. How much knowledge and of what kinds should business interviewers have? The problems of interviewers may be divided into two kinds: understanding the

orient, or direct, the interviewee's mind in a subject known only to the interviewee. In some cases the interviewer finds that he is unable to orient the interviewee as well as that person can do it for himself. The emotionally disturbed workman, for instance, must find a solution to his problem from his own background and pattern of living. An interviewer who continually wants to guide him and tell him how to do it will confuse rather than help. It may be very difficult for an interviewer to hold back when he believes he understands the whole problem.

The interviewer must remember, however, that his own internal orientation and body of ideas are quite different from those of his interviewee. It is not he, the interviewer, but the interviewee who is acquiring new knowledge, and who must fit it in according to the lines of his own orientation. In such cases, the interviewer's part may be restricted to re-expressing in clearer, more objective terms, the problem the employee has already described. Sometimes this function is little more than that of holding up a mirror to the employee to reflect back to him his gropings and his own gleams of insight.

This technique of interviewing, called nondirective interviewing, is a happy solution to the problem of orientation in counseling.[1] In many cases, however, the interviewer must hold the interviewee's attention to a particular subject and persuade, instruct, or reorient him to a predetermined point of view. He will have to study his interviewee as he expresses his ideas, and study the relationship of his own material to them. Orienting a person is a mutual process, a co-operative effort. It is for this reason that many experts on interviewing consider that the establishment of rapport or harmonious accord is the first requirement of a good interview.

But every interviewer, no matter what his subject, must realize that ideas cannot merely be thrust into the interviewee's mind without regard to what is already there by way of experience or what ideas are active when the interview takes place.

[1] The technique of the nondirective interview is discussed at greater length in Chapter 12.

in delving into these more difficult subjects. Unguided readers often mistake a specialty for a science, for example, by assuming that Freud and psychoanalysis represent the general field of psychology.

The Interviewer Should Be Open-minded. A desirable characteristic, associated to some extent with knowledge, is open-mindedness. The interviewer should never be shocked, surprised, or overtly disapproving of anything he hears. It may better be said that he should never show any surprise or disapproval. To do so will inhibit the interviewee and cut off the supply of information. The employment interviewer will have to pass judgment on what he hears, but the time to do so is not when the information is being given. Listening to whatever is said as though he expected to hear it, and accepting the interviewee as he is, are two means of getting complete information.

The Interviewer Must Talk. Some people have great difficulty in making any small talk. They seem to feel that each word they speak is going to be recorded in the Doomsday Book of judgment and should be worthy of it. Calvin Coolidge is often cited for this characteristic. When asked what a Sunday sermon was about, he replied, "Sin," when asked what the preacher had said, he responded, "He was against it." On the other hand, people who ramble along indefinitely, "talking but saying nothing," are no better.

An analogous characteristic worth considering is the method of approach to subjects—the generalized approach versus the detailed approach. Some individuals, after asking a few general questions, feel that they have asked all. "What work have you done before?" "What is your training?" "Tell me why you think I ought to hire you." On the other hand, some interviewers will ask detailed questions for more than an hour without covering the subject at hand. Such interviewers are often bringing general habits of thought and work into their interviews. Some are interested in examining generalizations, others are more interested in details. Awareness of this char-

technical aspects of the business and understanding people. Interviewers' knowledge, too, should be of these two kinds.

Business Knowledge.—The more general knowledge an interviewer has of economics and business, the better will he be able to express himself to the interviewee. He should know the trend of the labor market and the prospects of prosperity or peril. He should know the labor law insofar as it relates to his fellow employees. His more immediate need, however, will be an intimate knowledge of the firm he works for, its policies and procedures. He must know how the various departments of the business operate and the kinds of people they need. He should, if possible, visit the departments and get to know the supervisors. He ought to understand the salary scale, the promotional opportunities, and the methods of rating. As an employment interviewer, his most imperative knowledge requirement will be in the needs of the various jobs themselves. These he must study carefully, both as to job specifications and employee characteristics required by these specifications—perhaps the IQ needed for one job, the years of experience or training for another.

Knowledge of People.—The type of knowledge that helps one to understand people may again be divided into two kinds. The first is a general background knowledge of the community which helps to make the interviewer and interviewee "similars." The second is a specific knowledge about people such as that provided by the sciences of psychology, sociology, and physiology.

Community background knowledge is found in an understanding of the language, local geography, local history, typical recreations, and activities of the community. The daily newspaper, radio, and television help a great deal in acquiring this type of knowledge.

Training in the social sciences is also helpful to the interviewer. Some of it can be obtained by the intelligent reader from books, but it is usually desirable to have some guidance

Personality as Related to Justice

There are techniques for reaching decisions, and these are examined in later chapters. Here our question is: "What are the personality characteristics of a just person?"

Probably the first of these is the wish to be just and the willingness to work at it. Someone has said that he can bear troubles no matter how great they are, if they are the troubles of someone else. Many people take very casually the decisions they make in regard to other people. They assume that it is the other person's responsibility to sell himself, and that, if he doesn't do it, it is his misfortune. The interviewer must realize, however, that his is the chief responsibility for getting all the facts and reaching a sound decision. He stands between applicant and applicant, or between applicant and firm, and his decision should be fair to both. He should "dig-out" the facts required in making a sound decision.

The wish to be just will motivate the interviewer to examine himself to uncover any prejudices or conditionings that may be there. Conditionings relate to such learning as is evidenced when a person distrusts anyone who wears a full beard, and finds, on self-examination, that someone with a full beard frightened him when he was a child. A person, too, may be prejudiced in many ways according to his own particular experience; against young "fresh" people, for example; or against old "scheming" individuals. An interviewer should be aware of the "kinks" in his own nature.

Mental Health and Maturity Are Required.—After a sense of values that places justice high enough to be worth working for, the further important personality requirements of a just interviewer are mental health and maturity.

Mental health is the condition of having few internal conflicts. It is the result of having lived an active, realistic life and having solved one's problems as they came along. The presence of such a condition is sometimes difficult to discover since people do not carry their internal conflicts on their coat sleeves. It may often be found in the answers to such ques-

acteristic, and the taking of certain precautions against it, is one of the characteristics of a good interviewer.

The Interviewer Must Speak in a Distinct Voice. It is a distinct benefit if the interviewer has a good speaking voice. College students, when asked to evaluate or rate their instructors, always have comments to make about their voices; they complain when a voice is harsh, raucous, or monotonous, and mention that a distinct, pleasant voice is an aid to learning. Clear enunciation is also necessary if we are to be sure that our questions are easily understood by the interviewee. Slight foreign accents probably do not make much difference and frequently seem quaint to people, but any marked accent which makes understanding difficult is undesirable. Slurring words, interjecting "ahs" between words, clearing one's throat repeatedly, or stammering—all such vocal defects interfere with interviewing.

The Interviewer Must Completely Understand Responses. —Some inexperienced interviewers fail to search for and find the meaning in responses given them. A man replies, for instance, "I'm an active politician all right, but I'm not active in politics." Some interviewers would merely record the fact that the person is not active in politics and go on to the next question. An alert interviewer, however, often learns more from carefully checked additions and implications in various statements than he does from the direct answers to his questions. In the case cited, the interviewer should follow up the lead given him and find out what the interviewee meant when he said, "I'm an active politician all right."

The interviewer should use his eyes to obtain information from the interviewee. The interviewer's eyes were given him to see with, and he should take full advantage of his opportunities. The interviewee may be wearing a loud-checkered suit or a diamond ring on each hand, have his hair cut in some unusual fashion, or reveal some significant characteristic. Be they negative or positive, visual indicators there will always be. Often what a person does speaks more eloquently than what he says.

mature person is so sure of himself, and of the affections of his family and friends, that he can forget himself when he faces the world and assume an objective attitude. Yet there are interviewers who work at building up their own egos in every interview. They tell stories of their exploits; hint that they are extra-generous, noble-hearted people; and explain that, if it were up to them alone, they would do everything for the interviewee.

In counseling, the interviewer has a particular need for emotional independence. He listens day after day to "hard-luck" stories and must not become emotionally involved. If he worries with everyone whose worries he hears, he will soon be a physical wreck. The employment interviewer must not give out jobs on the basis of sympathy. The disciplinary interview must not be "mushed-up" with the statement that the discipline was ordered by someone else and really doesn't mean anything.

One point worthy of particular notice here is that the interviewer should always shoulder the responsibilities of his office. "Passing the buck" is no better technique in interviewing than anywhere else. The employment interviewer who tells an applicant that he would be glad to give him the job, but that someone else must be satisfied, only lowers his own value in the eyes of the applicant and interferes with his responsibility of obtaining complete information from the applicant. After all, why should an applicant bother to tell his story to one who does not have the authority to give him the job?

The Interviewer's Relations with His Firm.—Having examined the personality of the interviewer with relation to his work, we must examine it further with relation to the firm for which he works. In our economic system of individual enterprise, every business must make a profit or it will go out of existence. This requirement makes it necessary for the employment interviewer to find the best possible person for each job. He cannot allow his heart to overpower his reason. He must always be friendly, but he must never be sentimental. Every community has agencies to care for the helpless and

tions as these: "Does he have many friends of both sexes, a harmonious family life, numerous interests and hobbies?" "Does he live an isolated, ill balanced life?" "Is he suspicious, envious, too timid, cautious, 'tight' in money matters?" "Does he always rationalize his mistakes and continually blame someone else?"

Mental conflicts and disturbances resulting from one's own problem upset a person's judgment by causing blind spots and making him supersensitive in other areas. For instance, an interviewer whose mother committed suicide saw family disturbances in nearly everyone to whom he talked. Over and over he determined that individuals were not doing well vocationally, were in poor health, or were discouraged, because of "emotional problems" in the home. He did not seem to understand that these findings were projections of his own condition.

Maturity is a word requiring some interpretation. Children have very little understanding of what the world is like, yet they have active minds. In consequence they people their world with goblins, witches, and fairies, and power it with magic. It takes a good many years to get rid of the magic and to replace the preternatural with real people. Even some college students, as well as many less educated oldsters, are convinced that success is largely a matter of luck (magic). Gambling and give-away radio programs reveal that many people depend upon the magic of some lucky number, sign, or day. The lack of a thirteenth floor in many large buildings is another eloquent reminder. The mature person, on the other hand, has considerable faith in cause and effect. He believes that work is best done by a person with adequate skill and sufficient motivation. He expects to find a reason somewhere for things that have gone wrong. He follows effects back to their causes.

The mature person has developed a certain amount of emotional independence. As an infant in a mysterious world, one needs the support that love and friendliness give. Some people never outgrow this emotional requirement and attempt to ingratiate themselves to everyone with whom they deal. A

Chapter 4

THE INTERVIEW ENVIRONMENT
AND RELATED PROBLEMS

With the best available interviewer who has been given adequate training, there will still be handicaps to good interviewing. These handicaps consist in special pressures of many kinds that operate on both the interviewer and interviewee. Of course, they will chiefly affect the interviewee because he is much more sensitive to the environment—particularly when seeking employment.

Special Pressures on the Interviewer

An interviewer should keep his interviewing self entirely separate from all his other selves. He should never allow his debts, taxes, ambitions, illness at home, or any other personal interest to impinge on his thoughts and influence his decisions during the interview. When he goes to work, an interviewer should slip into an "ivory tower" where he should sit with great calmness, complete objectivity, and sincere friendliness, treating each and every interviewee with impartial wisdom.

But he can't do it. An interviewer is a person, too, and as such must take his whole self along each time he goes to work. His feelings and emotions, particularly, suffuse his whole being, and even enter into his thoughts and "push them around." What causes these feelings and emotions, and where do they come from? Even in the psychological laboratory where scientists try to take the mind apart to examine each part separately, they have never been able to educe out an emotion that was pure and simple, that was unattached to any ideas and accompanied by no impulses to action. No one

needy. The interviewer can well be interested in these and contribute to them. He has, however, no right to employ and take into the firm a helpless or needy person just because he is in such a state.

A second factor in the interviewer-firm relationship deals with the general efficiency of the business. The alert interviewer, talking as he does with many people both within and outside the business, should frequently learn of new techniques and better ways of doing things than is current practice in the firm. Learning these ideas, however, is not enough; he must "sell" them to the management. One might imagine that it would be adequate if the interviewer merely passed on what he had learned. Management, however, can be as resistant to new ideas as any self-centered individual. The interviewer needs as much tact and diplomacy to tell management of new ideas as he does to reject courteously an applicant for work. In this case, however, the interviewer needs poise, courtesy, and tact in dealing with a superior; an ability many people do not have.

Finally, the interviewer may be expected, as part of his work, to increase efficiency and save money in his own work and in his department. This may entail research and the preparation of clear, comprehensive reports.

All of these talents are called for in the interviewer. The demands may seem quite high, but the rewards exceed them. There are both many satisfactions and many rewards for the person who achieves a real success in interviewing.

analyze himself, and so come to know himself better. The knowledge he will gain by this self-analysis will help him in reaching decisions that are just and fair.

We must assume now for the moment that the interviewer is a human being and not quite perfect. He may have been assigned to the work of interviewing for business reasons, even though he is not suited to the work. Various factors may influence him which would not be there if he were the perfect interviewing personality in the perfect situation. By calling attention to these factors and analyzing them, we may enable the interviewer to be on guard against his own weaknesses, so that his judgments will be relatively sound. In making this analysis, let us divide the individual into his personal self, his social self, and his business self. Although obviously an artificial division, it will be helpful in isolating those sources of errors which lie in the interviewer's ensemble.

Sources of Error in the Interviewer's Personal Self.—The interviewer, first of all, has a whole series of bodily needs and wants that may creep insidiously into his decisions on the job. The most simple, and perhaps the most persistent, of these are such wants as hunger, thirst, needs for elimination, fatigue, desire to smoke, irritation from bad posture due to a chair that doesn't "fit," or a light that shines continually in his eyes. If an interviewer gets hungry along about eleven-thirty because he didn't eat a good breakfast, it may do more to upset his judgment for the next half hour than can be mended by thirty years of experience. If an interviewer is unduly fatigued because of long hours, overtime, a late party the night before, or a weekend skiing in the mountains, this fatigue is almost sure to produce a little impatience, carelessness, or undue skepticism that the interviewer himself will probably not recognize. The best thing to do in such cases, of course, is to satisfy the bodily want and so remove the irritation. The next best thing is to understand the situation. When an interviewer recognizes that he is hungry or tired, he should be on his guard not to allow this fact to hurry him or influence his thinking. An interviewer should not allow himself to continue bad

can account for these feelings and emotions in the precise way an accountant gives detailed statements of the income and expenditure of money. The causes and consequences of emotion are usually only vaguely understood. It is an old story that some people fall desperately in love, only to discover later that they loved some ideal; "they were in love with love" and not with a person. An individual can be raging mad and mistake the cause. He may take a violent dislike to a person because in some way the person resembles another individual dealt with in past experience, and yet the resemblance may be entirely unrecognized. A certain man suffered a triple disaster. He failed in business, his son was killed in World War II, and, a short time later, his wife died. Now this man goes about talking to anyone who will hear him, and he has only one story. The whole world is in a desperately tragic condition. All of our public officials are dishonest. The President of the United States is incompetent. Business men are all grasping and thieving. Sympathetic acquaintances bear with the man because of his troubles but no one takes his opinions very seriously. Everyone can see what the man himself appears blind to, that his wretched opinion of the world is an expression or projection of his own personal wretchedness. It is not an objective judgment of what is going on.

The job of separating the interviewee into factors or special capacities, of extracting, say, his finger dexterity, is extremely difficult. The interviewer has a name for the error he commits when he tends to judge the interviewee as a unit. He calls it *halo*. But there is no word in common practice to emphasize the fact that the interviewer is also an inseparable unit, bringing problems of the home, golf or bridge scores, and other competitive successes or failures into the interview with him. Suppose, for the purpose of our discussion here, we name this unity of personality the interviewer's *ensemble*, that is, the general effect of the individual which comes from many hidden sources.

Even though an interviewer must work as an *ensemble*, however, and cannot completely separate his activities, he can

countenance a teetotaler. These biases emanate from some particular aspect of a person's life and take partial control over his ensemble; that is, they influence his general behavior and final decisions more than the items are worth at objective evaluations.

The interviewer has, from childhood, been accumulating a body of ideas and opinions which will inevitably influence his decisions and the way he thinks about things. This can be shown by the example of one man who had spent a more or less adventurous youth in the Northwest. He was in World War I as an ambulance driver, and in World War II spent considerable time in the Orient as a captain in the Intelligence Service. Now, an older man in rather poor health, he has settled into a stable or permanent office job. But he has little use for a younger man who does the same sort of work. In his opinion, every young fellow should be following adventure or "getting experience." Another interviewer is a somewhat militant materialist. His childhood training was that of a Catholic, but he thought his mother had been overinfluenced by the Church and broke away. He broke so far away that he now has great contempt for anyone who goes to any church, or is in any way an idealist. He believes all such individuals are naïve and "wishful thinkers," and would not give them much consideration in any interview if once he discovered their religious or idealistic views.

The Personal Self Is also Partly Emotional.—Tangled traffic in driving to work, something misplaced or lost, a work assignment given to someone and not finished on time, an interference with one's work that seems unnecessary—all these things and many more can arouse a person's emotions and take from him the cool objectivity that is so important in interviewing.

It is believed that all people have some sort of cycle or rhythm to their emotional life. At times they are optimistic, eager, forward looking, and at other times they are glum, pessimistic, and critical. These emotional outlooks are supposed to alternate with more or less regularity and intensity, depend-

habits, such as getting up at the last minute and rushing off without breakfast.

Permanent illness, weaknesses, or physical handicaps of any kind are apt to influence a person's judgment. Alfred Adler developed his concept of the inferiority complex upon this background, and claimed that many people even selected occupations that were compensatory to some difficulty. Many doctors and dentists and people occupied continually with the problem of health, he believed, had had their attention turned in that direction in early youth by physical ills. It is not necessary to agree entirely with Adler to understand that a person's long-time concern with his own constitution, an ever-present companion, may direct his attention to particular characteristics of another individual, such as his teeth, his complexion, or his tendency to have headaches. These same characteristics may then be heavily overweighted in evaluating another person, and quite unconsciously.

Any personal characteristic in which an individual comes into competition with other people, may "condition" him and permanently bias him. Beauty, or its lack, in the interviewee, tallness, shortness, fatness, thinness, forwardness, and bashfulness are all seen by the interviewer in a biased way if he has had pronounced experiences with these characteristics in himself. As to whether he will sympathize with and favor these traits, or dislike the people who possess them, depends a good deal upon the particular experiences the interviewer has had. Since the interviewer cannot get rid of his tallness or shortness, and in most cases, his thinness or lack of beauty, it is particularly important for him to know that his unguarded judgments are influenced by his possession of these traits.

Deeply imbedded habits of neatness, of steady working, of fast eating, of chain smoking, often bias people who possess these traits or who have expended effort to avoid them. Some very neat people immediately lose respect for a person who appears to be sloppy. Some individuals who work very hard all the time can have no use for another person if they once get the idea that he is lazy. Some people who drink cannot

approval comes entirely from his good qualities, or partly from friendly relationships experienced in the same club.

Then there is the pressure from society at large. Sociologists tell us that even in America our society breaks up into "the upper class, the middle class and the lower class." Each individual finds himself more or less consciously in one of these divisions of society. With membership in an upper class often goes a sort of public recognition of quality that may not actually be present in the person under consideration. Such a person may put pressure on an interviewer and "get away with it" because of his recognized situation in society.

A person's social self may also be considered as a complex of social skills. The interviewer, too, has a social self and social skills. And so, in some cases, the interview may become a social duel. A person who spends most of his time in social affairs, is an excellent conversationalist, and has learned to influence, dominate, and persuade, may put a less skilful interviewer in some trouble. On the other hand when it is the interviewer who has the skill he may find himself using it to fence verbally with his opponent, rather than holding closely to his job description and getting the information he needs.

The aggressiveness and dominance that the interviewer thinks he finds in the applicant may be in the interviewer himself, and to an extent to which he is unaware. The interviewer may show his disgust, approval, and other reactions in a way that is quite apparent to some interviewees, and still not be aware himself of doing so. But all such expression of social behavior, or social skill, learned by the interviewer in his general social life is sure to enter into the interview to influence the amount of information that can be elicited.

Special Influence on the Interviewer's Business Self.—On the job itself there may be a great many influences that make calm, objective interviewing very difficult. To begin with, the interviewer may be in the wrong occupation and disinterested in his work. Many interviewers have been selected for the work on the basis of some other criterion than their own desire to do it. In some cases, interviewing is looked upon merely

ing upon the individual. If the interviewer does swing back and forth from the blues to optimism, he may be sure that these moods will creep into his interview decisions, unless he is fully aware of the tendency and sets up barriers against it.

Pressures on the Interviewer's Social Self.—No one lives in a social vacuum; everyone arranges for himself a whole series of social obligations which he takes more or less seriously. We can begin with an individual's family. Even when everything runs smoothly, there are still apt to be distractions because of bridge parties, family entertainments, and obligations to relatives and neighbors. Sometimes these obligations require only time and energy for their fulfilment, but sometimes they bear down in a different way. John, your neighbor's son, comes in for a job and you find yourself the interviewer. It will make neighborhood relationships rather strained if you turn him down. After all, if he is given a chance, his own merits will soon determine whether the company will want to keep him or not. As a result of such social pressure, the interviewer may be inclined to "pass the buck" and evade his responsibility to be just.

When family difficulties arise, the strain may be even greater. A case of illness at home may call for overtime work on the job to earn more money, or overtime work at home to do the duties the sick person cannot do. Or, again, it may simply produce an emotional home climate of worry in which it is very difficult to live and work.

When an interviewer is married and has his own home, he has the responsibilities of taxes and current expenses to trouble him. For those not yet married there is the matter of boy friends or girl friends, of courting or being courted, which takes on immense importance to the individual. Then too the interviewer may be a Mason or an Elk, or have membership in some other social group. These memberships are frequently very good for a person, but they carry with them their obligations too—obligations that are not supposed to reach into the interviewing room, but actually do in many cases. If we approve of someone, it is impossible to tell whether that

approval comes entirely from his good qualitics, or partly from friendly relationships experienced in the same club.

Then there is the pressure from society at large. Sociologists tell us that even in America our society breaks up into "the upper class, the middle class and the lower class." Each individual finds himself more or less consciously in one of these divisions of society. With membership in an upper class often goes a sort of public recognition of quality that may not actually be present in the person under consideration. Such a person may put pressure on an interviewer and "get away with it" because of his recognized situation in society.

A person's social self may also be considered as a complex of social skills. The interviewer, too, has a social self and social skills. And so, in some cases, the interview may become a social duel. A person who spends most of his time in social affairs, is an excellent conversationalist, and has learned to influence, dominate, and persuade, may put a less skilful interviewer in some trouble. On the other hand when it is the interviewer who has the skill he may find himself using it to fence verbally with his opponent, rather than holding closely to his job description and getting the information he needs.

The aggressiveness and dominance that the interviewer thinks he finds in the applicant may be in the interviewer himself, and to an extent to which he is unaware. The interviewer may show his disgust, approval, and other reactions in a way that is quite apparent to some interviewees, and still not be aware himself of doing so. But all such expression of social behavior, or social skill, learned by the interviewer in his general social life is sure to enter into the interview to influence the amount of information that can be elicited.

Special Influence on the Interviewer's Business Self.—On the job itself there may be a great many influences that make the calm, objective interviewing very difficult. To begin with, the interviewer may be in the wrong occupation and disinterested in his work. Many interviewers have been selected for the work on the basis of some other criterion than their own desire to do it. In some cases, interviewing is looked upon merely

ing upon the individual. If the interviewer does swing back and forth from the blues to optimism, he may be sure that these moods will creep into his interview decisions, unless he is fully aware of the tendency and sets up barriers against it.

Pressures on the Interviewer's Social Self.—No one lives in a social vacuum; everyone arranges for himself a whole series of social obligations which he takes more or less seriously. We can begin with an individual's family. Even when everything runs smoothly, there are still apt to be distractions because of bridge parties, family entertainments, and obligations to relatives and neighbors Sometimes these obligations require only time and energy for their fulfilment, but sometimes they bear down in a different way. John, your neighbor's son, comes in for a job and you find yourself the interviewer. It will make neighborhood relationships rather strained if you turn him down. After all, if he is given a chance, his own merits will soon determine whether the company will want to keep him or not. As a result of such social pressure, the interviewer may be inclined to "pass the buck" and evade his responsibility to be just

When family difficulties arise, the strain may be even greater. A case of illness at home may call for overtime work on the job to earn more money, or overtime work at home to do the duties the sick person cannot do. Or, again, it may simply produce an emotional home climate of worry in which it is very difficult to live and work.

When an interviewer is married and has his own home, he has the responsibilities of taxes and current expenses to trouble him. For those not yet married there is the matter of boy friends or girl friends, of courting or being courted, which takes on immense importance to the individual. Then too the interviewer may be a Mason or an Elk, or have membership in some other social group. These memberships are frequently very good for a person, but they carry with them their obligations too—obligations that are not supposed to reach into the interviewing room, but actually do in many cases. If we approve of someone, it is impossible to tell whether that

the interviewer has a personal life, with physical wants, emotions, and ideas that intrude into his interviewing, often at the wrong times, to lead him to hurried and biased decisions.

In brief the interviewer is an ensemble, a collection of forces which he organizes into a unit—a Mr. Jones, who listens calmly to an interviewee and gives his decision on the merits of the case alone. This calmness, this unity and awareness and control of all one's forces, is, however, an ideal rather than an actuality. The interviewer, by self-knowledge and reasonable effort to obtain a sound environment, must work toward the achievement of this ideal.

The Interview Environment

Although a great deal has been said and many studies made on every aspect of personnel interviewing, and many millions of dollars spent on setting up personnel departments, not much thought has been given to the interview environment. A company executive who, when considering an individual for employment or promotion, may quote to himself the old proverb, "a fair exterior is a silent recommendation," may overlook the fact that the waiting room and interviewing desk provide the "exterior" to his company as far as many a new or prospective employee is concerned. Young people out for their first jobs sometimes complain at being interviewed "before iron bars." Not quite as bad as that, they may be led by a secretary through a maze of desks and people into a glass-enclosed office with people continually staring in. A goldfish bowl would have given them as much privacy.

Why does this happen time and time again? Generally, a company begins to grow and one morning Management wakes up to the fact that no longer can Mr. President handle all of the personnel problems of each employee, nor can his department heads take time to investigate and hire their own workers. A specialist must be hired to handle the apparently million-odd problems pertaining to the employees.

So immediately a corner is selected; up go a few panels and a sign appears on the door announcing a "Personnel Depart-

as a steppingstone to something else; a source of experience in dealing with people before the next level of supervisory work is reached. In such cases the interviewing is usually done in a perfunctory manner with one eye on the next job. The interviewer should be "sold" on the value of doing interviewing before he is allowed to do it.

There is too, the individual who wants to do interviewing but is constitutionally unfitted for it and becomes more interested in the interview-report form he is developing than in the success of the people he selects.

Another common situation is that in which interviewing is only a part of a person's work, the other parts being assigned without too careful calculation. In such cases the interviewer may find himself struggling with all sorts of responsibilities, some of them with "dead-lines" attached to them, so that as he interviews he frequently finds himself thinking of other things and jotting down notes on what he must do later.

Nor must we forget the business hierarchy within the plant. The interviewer usually has many superiors in the firm, and sometimes more than one of them can give him instructions. Occasionally he may be interrupted even while interviewing and told to do a certain thing "now," or "soon," or "next." And there will be times when superiors in the company send the interviewer applicants who have their personal approval and whom the interviewers are expected to pass. This, of course, should never happen with an unqualified person. But there are companies and times when it does happen. It is bad for various reasons. It violates the interviewer's sense of responsibility, his relationships with his other applicants, and invites repetition of a basically bad practice.

filing space required, and the general scope of the work. The possibility of growth, as well as present needs, should also be considered. Special requirements—the confidential nature of the work, the fact that, at times, it may be necessary to deal with individuals who are in a highly emotional state—should be taken into account, too.

According to Kenneth H. Ripnen,[1] the following figures may be used as a guide in estimating space requirements.

	Square Feet
For each individual in an office, per person....	100
Major executive	400
Subexecutive	200
Conference room (10 to 12 persons)	600
Reception room	600
Interview room	200
Per file	5

The layout in Fig. 1 prepared by the Metropolitan Life Insurance Company[2] illustrates one possible arrangement of an employment office.

A number of elementary services may be expected by the applicant. The least of these is that there be hooks for hanging hats and coats, and perhaps a convenient shelf for bundles. It is awkward to sit for half an hour or so while holding one's hat or topcoat. Sometimes applicants have combined other errands with their search for a job, and have with them a package or two. It may be distracting to carry these into the interview and many people would prefer to leave them on a safe shelf. Other desirable facilities, particularly when applicants may be asked occasionally to wait for more than an hour, are drinking water and access to restrooms. The waiting room, of course, should be warm and well ventilated. Some people become very nervous at the prospect of an interview and find their mouths "dry as cotton." The elementary services sug-

---

[1] Kenneth R. Ripnen, "Space Standards in the Office Layout," *Office Equipment Digest*, November, 1942, p. 23.

[2] See also Policyholders Service Bureau, Group Insurance Division, *Office Planning and Layout* (New York: Metropolitan Life Insurance Co., 1950), pp. 21-22, for additional material on the interview environment.

ment." Soon after, a desk, a telephone, and a chair—and the Personnel Director himself is settled within these portals. Actually, Management did not mean to handle it in this way. The department was never planned but just grew up bit by bit in response to repeated demands. Management merely gave working space as required to the individual who was to take over all the personnel headaches and make everyone happy. In the rush, all forgot that the "fair exterior is a silent recommendation."

When an applicant steps into an employment office he tends to be supersensitive, like a person adventuring into a new country. He looks about him, examines things, and evaluates them. He also is apt to assume that the kind of treatment he receives in the waiting room is indicative of the treatment he will receive on the job, if hired. The core of his attitude of company loyalty or company disloyalty is being formed.

The applicant likes, first of all, to be treated as a human being. If he must sit and wait, he would prefer to have a comfortable seat. Benches without backs are not very attractive. Straight-backed chairs set out in rows like a school room do not appeal very much. Since the applicant is not yet a worker, he will feel more at ease if the atmosphere is a little casual. Chairs that can be moved, that are easy to sit in, help to create just such an atmosphere.

Since, usually, most applicants are strangers to most of the other applicants in the waiting room, the space requirements of that room should be ample. It is not nice to have strangers standing on your toes, sitting in your lap, or breathing down your neck. Many companies arrange an expanding waiting room. When peak waiting loads do not correspond with cafeteria use, it is sometimes possible to have some of the applicants wait in the cafeteria. There are other advantages in having the waiting room near the cafeteria, such as the availability of drinking fountains. Some companies have been known to give each waiting applicant an order on their cafeteria for one free cup of coffee.

Obviously the size and shape of the employment office will depend upon the number of applicants to be interviewed, the
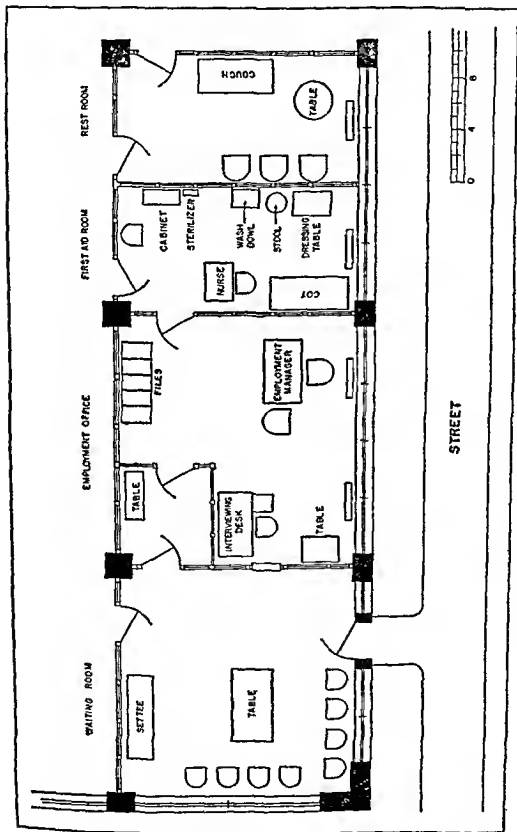
Fig. 1.—Layout for an Employment Office. (Metropolitan Life Insurance Co.)

gested will make them feel more comfortable when they come to the interview and thereby enable them to talk more easily and make a better presentation of their case.

It is usually agreed that reading matter adds a lot to a waiting room. Doctors and dentists who have a great deal of experience with a waiting clientele, and upon whose minds the matter of public relations rests fairly heavily, nearly always provide quite a variety of reading matter in their waiting rooms. If a company has a house organ or other printed matter relating to its activities, it is recommended that it be provided in the waiting room since this makes very suitable reading matter for the applicants. It can be assumed that by asking for a job a person expresses his interest in a company and he will be curious to know something more about it. It is wise, however, not to depend entirely upon company reading matter. Among the applicants may be friends or relatives of present employees who have seen all this reading matter before, and who, for one reason or another, are surfeited with company information. For these, and for those who would prefer casual browsing, some reading matter of more general interest is desirable.

There is little use in providing reading matter unless the lighting is adequate, so good light is a matter of considerable importance. And, when the lighting is satisfactory, the things to be seen, the color of the walls, and the pictures on the walls should be carefully selected. Pleasant wall coloring that reflects light well, wall pictures of a serene nature contributing to a calm atmosphere, and sometimes—depending upon the type of applicants—fresh flowers in season that brighten things up and add to the introductory topics of conversation, all are desirable in winning the good opinion and ease that are so desirable.

Decoration is not a question of good taste alone, however, since thought must be given to the acoustics of an office. Hard plastic walls and glazed surfaces cause bad sound effects and can produce an echo. The need of soft hanging drapes, therefore, as well as the possible need for soundproof materials in the ceiling and walls must be given consideration.

being given the chance to talk to their waiting friends. For instance, two friendly typists may come in to apply for work. One of these may have much more skilful than the other. Suppose the poor one has had the first interview and is told there is no work for her at that particular time. If she sees her waiting friend she is apt to report "no more typists wanted today," and the two of them may then go out together. The company might much rather have said, "no poor typists wanted," or perhaps, "go back and get a little more training and experience and then come back." The good typist may have been needed immediately. When a company allows its information about job prospects to be relayed to waiting applicants by rejected applicants, a good deal of misinformation is almost sure to be passed out, and the company is almost certain to lose a good many prospective excellent employees.

The Personnel Department should also be easily accessible to employees who may wish to discuss personal matters without having everyone know that they have visited the department. Many companies spend a lot of money in determining employee attitudes, and rendering this or that service to build up a good attitude. They often do not realize, however, that easy access to the personnel department by employees, and an easy return to their work unscrutinized by curious eyes, would often go a long way toward producing the attitude they want.

Department heads, too, should be able to visit the personnel department without being observed by employees on the job. Rumors run quickly through any group of people. This is particularly true when there is any stress—any fear, for instance, that some people are going to be laid off. The situation is similar when there is some promotion in prospect and several contestants. Watching employees are very apt to misinterpret reasons why their department head has gone to the personnel office and perhaps start a rumor that is entirely untrue, or one that is awkward to handle because it is half true. Privacy is a very important matter in all the communications of the personnel office. The personnel files usually hold a great deal of information that is confidential. Not only must this material be carefully guarded, but the impression

When smoking is permitted, some provision should be made for it; matches or lighters and ash trays should be easily available to all. Some companies provide little packages of matches stamped with the name of the company.

It must be remembered, of course, that the new applicant is just being introduced to the company and the waiting and interviewing rooms are aiding in this orientation and introduction. This realization demands that the waiting room should be as pleasant as any of the work rooms, but not markedly different from them. It would not produce a good orientation if an air of luxury and ease in the introduction were later replaced by an atmosphere of stoical plainness and lack of convenience in the work room. In the waiting and interview rooms a company should put its "best foot forward." But, at the same time, it should not misrepresent. The waiting room should obviously belong to a business establishment. The atmosphere of the work rooms should seem to follow logically. The employment office must be arranged in keeping with the rest of the company's office space. An applicant finding himself in an elaborate reception room naturally expects to find the remainder of the office to be as well furnished. It comes as a shock to a new employee to enter a dingy working area, or a bullpen general office, following an overnice reception room. In such cases the contrast may even cause dissatisfaction, and the company begins to lose employee favor at the beginning. The company must be honest with its prospective employees in atmosphere as well as in words.

Personnel Communications.—We come now to the consideration of how the personnel office should be arranged in order to best accomplish its purpose as a center of communications.

To begin with, since there may be a great many applicants coming and going, it is desirable that the employment office have easy access to the street, either directly or by being placed near the elevators. Since, further, the decision in regard to one applicant may be different from that in regard to another applicant, it is best if applicants exit by a second door without

We must now question whether there is anything related to the interviewing room which has any bearing on the justice of the decisions reached there. The answer is yes, there is. The interviewer and interviewee should be placed on an apparent equality. It is better that the interviewee have a chair about as comfortable, or imposing, as that of the interviewer. Of course, the interviewer sits there all day, while each applicant is a transient. But probably the cost of the furniture is repaid many times in more candid interviews, if both people can sit with equal ease.

The light, too, should fall on both faces in about the same way. It is never wise, although it has been done, to allow the interviewer to sit in the shade and spotlight the interviewee. Any advantage gained in studying the interviewee's face will be lost by inhibiting and cautioning him. Finally, although this is probably outdated practice, it is unwise to place the interviewer on a higher chair, or dais, or let him look down on the interviewee. Some companies suggest to their interviewer that he may sit on the same side of the desk as his interviewee. Anything that helps to suggest equality and friendliness is desirable, whether the suggestion be made by the arrangement of the furniture, or by the things said.

As this foregoing discussion has revealed, the interviewing environment is a forceful stimulus to the oversensitive applicant for work. This environment works continually either to help the interviewer win the confidence and co-operation of his interviewee, or to hinder it.

given by the placing of the files and the arrangement of the whole department must be one that builds confidence.

A separate conference room is very desirable. It can be used by applicants who have been processed by the employment interviewer and are waiting further interviews by department heads or foremen. It can be used for department conferences with staff members and for administering various intelligence, aptitude and vocational tests.

When applicants are asked to fill out an application blank in the waiting room, the materials necessary should, of course, be available. The blotters, pencils, and pens should be kept always in good working order. If possible, it is wise to have an extra typewriter available in order that an applicant may complete his application on a typewriter if he has started it that way at home and finds added information is called for.

The Interview Itself.—When it comes to the actual employment interview, there should be no distraction by loud noises from the shop, clacking typewriters from the office, or uninhibited talk and laughter from old employees. The principal requirement of the interview is a semiprivacy.

The degree of privacy optional in the employment office indicates the perverseness of human nature. If, as previously mentioned, the applicant is interviewed in a "goldfish bowl," he will be self-conscious and inhibited. He will be too fully aware of the watchful glances of everyone around him to "let himself go" and tell his story. But, on the other hand, if he is interviewed in complete privacy behind closed doors he may be uneasy, a little frightened, and just as inhibited as he was in the "goldfish bowl" atmosphere. This is a particularly true in the case of a young woman looking for her first job who is interviewed by a man. The right degree of privacy for an interviewing office is best called semiprivacy, rendering the newcomer the protection of having others know what is going on, but not being able to see much or hear anything. This suggests a small room with a glass-front door, or no door. A small office partitioned off with wood paneling below and glass above, is another solution.

do at this moment?" Sensations from all over your body—sights, sounds, muscular sensations, aches and pains—combined with memories and anticipations—contribute to the way you feel at this instant. Minor unobserved things insidiously creep in to influence the way you feel. Similarly, insidious influences often creep in to take one's attention away from the essential factors in a judgment.

When we break down the problem of judgment into parts upon which we can concentrate more clearly, we find ourselves examining: (1) the man who makes the judgment, (2) the nature of the facts used in sizing up a person, and (3) the methods of making a judgment. We shall consider each of these in turn.

Men and Judgments

A general level of confidence is not the only temperamental factor that can affect judgment. The interviewer is, of course, an emotional being. He has days when every objective seems possible and every applicant interesting. He also has days when he feels that the end of civilization is "just around the corner." On the latter days he is likely to feel that every applicant is inadequate and all interviewing useless. These ups and downs in emotional mood come to everyone, but to the interviewer they are a definite problem. He must endeavor to make equable judgments on good and bad days alike. To be just, in spite of his emotional state, the interviewer must recognize what his emotional state is. If he is "blue" and depressed, he must make an extra effort to be sure this mood is not the guiding factor in his decisions. When he is "riding on top of the world," he must be careful and cautious in his work, even though he does not feel like doing so.

When we judge the errors of a judge, we find that the errors fall into two classes: those of carelessness and those resulting from the biases of experience.

The interviewer who makes the judgment may be careless. Some people do not have enough imagination to grasp the implications of their actions. Consider, for example, the un-

Chapter 5

THE PROBLEM OF JUDGMENT

Good judgment is needed everywhere, but in employment interviewing it is a special requirement. It can mean the difference between finding a good employee and accepting a very bad one. It is a basic factor in making just decisions.

Unfortunately it is not possible to determine a man's ability as a judge by the amount of confidence he has in himself. An easy experiment will demonstrate this fact. Give privately to each of three individuals some problems in mental arithmetic in rapid succession, demand their answers as quickly as they can give them, and clock them with a stopwatch. With each answer have them state: "I'm certain" or "I think so" or "I'm not sure." If this experiment is done carefully, it will bring out the fact that when A is sure he is right, he is more likely to be so than when he is uncertain, but that B who is characteristically "not sure," may be correct more frequently than C, who is nearly always "certain." Assurance in a judge is to some extent a temperamental characteristic. Hitler, it is said, was certain he knew how to fight a war.

What is judgment? Judgment can be described as an activity halfway between guess and measurement. We do not talk of using judgment when we follow a "hunch" or a careless guess. Neither do we think of judgment when all factors can be completely measured and added up. We talk of using "considered judgment" when there are various elements of uncertainty but we are as careful as can be.

In judging, we evaluate things not completely known or measured. Sometimes there are many of these partly known quantities. It is as difficult to judge a person (and for the same reason) as it is to answer the question: "Why do you feel as comfortable or uncomfortable, as happy or sad, as you

70

In these cases we are making habit responses to groups of people on the basis of stereotypes we have created. It is a very natural way of thinking and useful enough in its place, for life would be too difficult if we had to think of individual personalities all the time. In judging people, however, stereotypes are a handicap. We do not hire typical people but individual people. When we try to imagine ourselves fitting into a stereotype, we find how false to actual circumstances this procedure is. Would you personally feel fairly judged if you were weighed as a "typical" college student, a "typical" banker, a "typical" executive? The interviewer should examine his thinking for the tendency to form stereotypes and rid himself of it. We can only fall into error and confusion by using stereotypes in judging people.

Particular attention should be given to the simple methods of typing a person like: "He is a great talker; you know the type." Such statements have a justification in simplifying the difficulties of expression, but in the process of judgment they are handicaps. Psychologists have told us over and over that no clearly separated types of people have ever been found. When a given characteristic is examined among unselected groups of people, it usually falls into a distribution curve. People cannot accurately be classified as "small talkers" or "big talkers."

Some characteristics go together in vectors or complexes, but these require careful measurement. And there are no complexes that always represent the same group of forces, and in the same amounts, in different people. Consequently, in judgments, we should not evaluate a person as the "accounting type" or "sales type"—or "introvert" or "extrovert." Such phrases have their place, but the judge should estimate the degree of extroversion; he should enumerate the number and strength of characteristics helpful in selling. He must individualize rather than generalize his subject.

We Know So Much That Isn't So.—Every interviewer, or judge, is a human being who has, in growing up, accumulated a large store of experience. These bits of the past—selected

conscious cruelty and absence of judgment implied in the statement: "A few were hired and some were let go; so what!" There is little that can be said here for the interviewer who fails to consider his obligations carefully.

What Yardstick?—In employment interviewing, we always find personality set against personality—the interviewer against the interviewee. Some bias always develops from this juxtaposition of personalities, regardless of the job involved. It is inevitable that, to some extent, the interviewer will measure the applicant against himself. Since the interviewer does not usually possess a personality suited to the job requirements, such a comparison is almost inevitably beside the point and harmful. Properly the interviewer's judgment of the applicant as "inferior," "good," or "excellent" must be made by comparing the applicant with the job to be done, not by comparing him to one's self as a personal competitor.

We Oversimplify.—We are all creatures of habit in thought as well as action. Acquiring habits makes life easier for us. Whenever a situation is repeated or nearly repeated, we adjust to it with a habit mechanism. We are in the habit of treating men a little differently from women. Of course, not all men are alike, nor are all women; but they are somewhat alike, so instead of being alert to the personal characteristics of a particular person, we sometimes merely adjust to the masculine or feminine characteristics of the person and let it go at that. Not all salesmen are alike, either, but if we know a few dozen of them in the stores, and none of them well, we adjust to all of them in somewhat the same way. It is easier than treating each of them as an individual. As our experience broadens and our energy is spread thinner, we continue more and more to treat all bankers alike, all lawyers alike, all preachers alike. The less we know of a group, the more unified it becomes in our imaginations. All shepherds are likely to seem very much alike to city dwellers. All hoboes seem almost interchangeable, especially when we have no intimate ties with any one of them. All Arabs, all Hindus seem very much alike to us.

the committee meeting on the case. He then hired a messenger to wait near the committee room until the dean appeared and present him with a note from the businessman, reminding him of his promise. The boy was re-admitted.

The famous Judge Liebowitz, when he was an equally famous criminal lawyer, discussed the Lindbergh kidnapping case over the radio. In his talk he made the statement that when acting as counsel for defense, he would much rather have the last talk to the jury than the benefit of the legal presumption that the defendant is innocent until he is proved guilty. Alfred Noyes, the English poet, attributes great influence to immediacy of experience in his little poem that begins:

> A murdered man, ten miles away
>   Will hardly shake your peace,
> Like one red stain upon your hand;
> And a tortured child in a distant land
>   Will never check one smile today,
>   Or bid one fiddle cease.

When the interviewer has a number of people to interview at intervals for the same job, he will need to be particularly careful that the presence of an applicant does not have unwarranted importance in his decision.

3. *Length of Acquaintance Disturbs Impartial Judgment.* Another cause of bias is length of acquaintance. When we evaluate strangers and do not have much evidence to go on, we can be relatively objective. With people we have known for some length of time, we are often unconsciously influenced by our previous associations. Knight [1] has reported a study of the ratings of a thousand public school teachers, made by supervisors who had known the teachers for periods from six months to twenty-five years. As the years of acquaintance increased, the estimates rose. The teachers who had been supervised for more than twenty years were characteristically rated very high, even for physical efficiency on which the judgments were almost obviously false. Knight concludes with

[1] F. B. Knight, "The Effect of the 'Acquaintance Factor' upon Personal Judgments," *Journal of Educational Psychology,* XIV (1923), 129-42.

from here and there and held onto, in some cases, for emotional reasons in the same way that a child clings to a battered doll—often interfere with our comparisons in the present. A ready example is the engineer who believes that an engineering education is the best possible education and that all without it are only partially educated. A parallel case is the art student who believes that all people are narrow unless they have an arts background. These biases are so numerous that they can be classified, as we have in the following paragraphs, without exhausting the list.

1. *We May Attach Too Much Importance to Evidence from Sensations.* We are often biased by the effect of favorable or unfavorable sensations. We have a tendency to judge favorably people who are handsome, graceful, tall, or sweet-scented. When we are tired or hungry or under stress, we find it difficult to keep our mind on factors unrelated to meeting these needs. Out of this perhaps comes the salesman's slogan, "Feed your prospect." Banks, which render services much alike, place considerable emphasis on the impressiveness of their buildings in order to create a favorable distinction in the minds of customers. Doctors endeavor to maintain attractive offices and large department stores often spend lavishly on interior decorations.

There is much in human nature to indicate that the interviewer will often be influenced too much by his senses. Well-proportioned, well-groomed, handsome people with pleasant voices will frequently be favored to a greater extent than they deserve.

2. *The Here-and-Now Weighs Heavily.* We have a tendency to recognize most keenly the things that are immediately present. A businessman tells this story to demonstrate the point. The son of his friend was "separated" from college for disciplinary reasons. The boy repented and wanted to go back. The businessman saw the dean, explained the whole situation, and received the assurance that the boy's case would be carefully considered. Not satisfied to let the matter rest there, he persisted until he learned the day and hour and location of

People who, in one way or another, are "out of the interviewer's family"—from a different school, section of the country, social or economic level, and so forth—may often be unfairly and unrealistically judged. This characteristic of favoring our own is obviously a difficulty in any situation in which the purpose is to weigh objectively a person's actual abilities.

6. *We Look Down on Some.* Another source of error in judging people comes from moral pigeonholing. Morals are a vital and necessary force in the structure of any society. Yet, they sometimes lead us to misjudge other people. James Whitcomb Riley and Edgar Allan Poe were both reasonably good writers. Puritanical New England, however, would have none of either. An inebriate couldn't write anything worth reading was the brusque opinion.

7. *Group Suggestion Causes Bias.* An opinion often repeated by many people may lead us astray by becoming "common knowledge." There is a frequently repeated saying that the long-unemployed are poor material. This common suggestion can interfere disastrously with the estimation of a particular individual.

8. *Words Can Damn.* The influence of words can upset judgments. Mr. X says that Y is "unemployable," and the stigma of the term has damned him even though we do not know what Mr. X had in mind. Unemployable for what?

9. *Our Wants Disturb Our Judgments.* All of us have watched people buy expensive things which they did not need, and which they later regretted buying; their wants upset their judgment. "Wants" in employment interviewing, whether concerned with employing a relative or friend or a person who is able to do us a favor, are dangerous influences.

10. *Our Projected Troubles Cause Bias.* Any maladjustment in the judge will disturb his judgment. For instance, X, who was very conscious of his foreign accent, would not hire anyone with a similar accent, nor could he bear to have such a person near him.

the statement that it would usually be fair to say that judgment is of doubtful validity when the judge has known his subject too long

4 *Theories May Mislead* We human beings are given to concocting theories and these theories sometimes return to plague us and to lead us into error There is a theory that tall, lean people do not sleep at night, that they are introverted and thinkers. According to this view, stocky people are extroverts, hearty and practical The slight evidence that can be found to support this theory is far too weak to justify a decision on a particular person [2]

There is also a theory that all blond people are originally from the north, where life is hard They therefore became strong, Viking like, aggressive people and retain their characteristics even to this day On the other hand, this theory states that dark people are so because their ancestors lived in sunny lands and developed extra pigment to protect their skins from sunburn These sunland people are supposed to be lazy, luxury loving, loyal, and friendly people But anyone who judges an individual in accordance with this theory is as likely to be wrong as right

Of theories there is no end, and probably there should not be an end to them since they help in their place, but all general theories must be very closely inspected when applied to judging the abilities of individuals

5 *We Favor Our Kind* Essentially we are family folk You may remember the story of the Irishman who declared that he knew a man who could make a standing jump of seventeen feet

"Seventeen feet! 'Tis impossible, and sure you're a liar," retorted the second Irishman

"Ah, but Pat, 'twas none other than your brother, Mike," was the beguiling reply

"Oh, Mike it was! That's different Sure he could jump the seventeen feet and never mind thim"

[2] See Chapter 2

our decisions and judgments are constantly influenced by still another factor—an even more insidious one, in fact, because it is more difficult for us to recognize in ourselves and thereby to eliminate. This factor is our individual unconscious learning or conditioning. We find it reflected in an amusing test with the Terman-Binet intelligence scale. Five-year-old children are shown some pictures of beautiful and ugly women and asked: "Which one is beautiful?" Children who have not yet reached the age level where discrimination is possible often pick out the ugly for the beautiful. When asked why the selected face was considered beautiful, they are likely to reply, "Because it looks like mama," or "because it looks like Aunt Mabel." We learn more signs of approval or disapproval than we realize. Freud, in fact, went so far as to insist that most men marry the unconscious images of their mothers.

Conditioning was first studied in dogs. Pavlov, a Russian physiologist, rang a bell every day just before giving his dogs their food. After a while, the ringing of the bell alone would cause these dogs to salivate in the same way as they did at the sight of their dinner. A person with heavy black eyebrows who made us feel friendly toward him by being good to us might condition us to feel friendly toward anyone who has heavy black eyebrows. A person with a sing-song voice who struck us when we were young may have conditioned us to suspect and dislike everyone with a sing-song voice. We are usually as unconscious of this learning as were Pavlov's dogs.

Nearly all of us, as we go through life, like some people at first sight and dislike others as quickly. The reason for these reactions is usually that these persons remind us unconsciously of others who treated us well or poorly. Rarely do these immediate likes and dislikes have much to do with the intrinsic qualities of the people we are reacting to.

The difficulties with examining these conditioned or learned signs are the facts that they vary with each of us, and that we are usually unaware of their influence upon our decisions. Some of the influences that could set off these conditioned reactions are such things as a black dress, a wing collar, a person who makes gestures with his hands or has

11. *Transferred Judgments Are Often Wrong.* The transfer of judgments, the habit of attributing the characteristics of one person to another who is closely related in some way, is another cause of error. There is a tendency, for example, to attribute the qualities of a parent to the son, although even a moment's reflection will show how fallible is this idea. Many people, however, still think that a clergyman's children should be exceptionally pious and that a college professor's child should excel in studies.

Everyone Wears a Halo.—We often like people or dislike them as individuals without looking for or being able to find out the reason why. This tendency to make a single generalized judgment of the whole person has been called "halo." Halo tends to be accentuated by some of the biases we have been examining like recency of the experience and length of acquaintance as well as reputation for moral or immoral behavior (halo can be unfavorable). Halo has a strong influence when we are examining characteristics that are not clearly defined or well understood.

In all jobs where specific abilities are called for—hand dexterity, for example, or speed of movement—halo judgments are likely to lead us astray since hand dexterity is not closely related to the total personality impression. Of course, in certain jobs where the total personality counts, as in the work of a hostess or a sales person, it may be well to consider the halo reaction, but even in these cases it is desirable to know the specific abilities too. A person's halo is not always the same with all people. Beauty, for instance, would usually produce a favorable halo, but some people would not agree with the majority on just what constitutes beauty.

Rating scales have been devised and used partly to break down halo. By rating a person on a number of characteristics separately, the differences in ability within the individual are brought clearly in view. The technique of the rating scale is discussed elsewhere in this chapter.

Unconscious Learning Influences Us.—In addition to the somewhat generalized causes of bias which we have discussed,

Most of us turn facts into inferences too easily. We learn a few facts about a person and assume that all other characteristics of that person harmonize with these facts. For instance, if the applicant is well dressed and neat when we meet him (a fact), we tend to infer that he is habitually neat and usually well dressed, whereas it is possible that this particular person may be neat and clean only when he comes for an employment interview. His language is clear and free from vulgarity during the interview, so we assume that his language is always acceptable. Again, this may not always be the case.

Another channel of easy inference is similarity. This applicant loves to read and has a hobby of photography, so we link him almost immediately with someone we already know with these inclinations. As one was judged, so the other follows. Such inferences are the way of the mind, and to some extent necessary. But every inference should be labeled and guarded so that in review we can learn from our mistakes and improve our judgments.

The danger of mixing inferences with facts can be seen in the list below. It is taken from an outdated manual and contains some misleading statements on indications of dishonesty.

The following are signs which indicate untruthfulness in the interviewee. [Don't believe it.]

1. Hangdog appearance.
2. Tendency to repeat questions.
3. Talking in almost inaudible tones and acting as though he wishes the experience were over with.
4. Unnatural emphasis
5. Defensive smile or nervous laugh.
6. Unnecessary, minute accuracy.

Such factors might indicate dishonesty under some circumstances if linked with other evidence, but there is a great deal of inference involved in them. We have to infer that the emphasis is "unnatural" before we can infer that the emphasis indicates dishonesty. Again we must infer the smile to be defensive before we can infer the smile to mean dishonesty.

short arms or long arms, or who doodles or taps, or who is very beautiful or very ugly, and so on without end. What is more disturbing is the fact that, although we do not realize it, any of these influences, or others as trivial, may lead us either to dislike a person or to consider him "interesting" and like him more than would be warranted by the facts.

Whenever an interviewer becomes aware of the influence of one of these conditionings on himself he should record it, take careful note of the fact, and make an effort to eliminate its influence from his future judgments.

It is obvious from the examples given that every interviewer should search his heart and make an effort to rid himself of bias. True, he will never be successful in developing 100 per cent objectivity, but he will be partially successful. Awareness of the problem and careful self-examination are sure to help.

Profit From Past Mistakes.—Experience is a factor of great importance. The neophyte in almost any field is apt to make many mistakes. If he does his work conscientiously, he will undoubtedly improve as time goes on. But to improve with experience as a judge of people, the interviewer must know the results of his decisions—just as the marksman must find out how close his shots come to hitting the target if he is to improve his accuracy. A marksman might shoot all his life and not get much better if he did not find the direction and degree of his misses and make the necessary corrections. In the same way, every employment interviewer should keep track of the work record of everyone he hires.

The Bases of Judgment

Facts and Inferences; Grist for the Mill.—The employment interviewer who sizes up another person must have some basis for his conclusions. The raw materials of his finished product, the decision, are facts and inferences. These must be clearly separated.

the subjective information that indicates how well or poorly a worker will get along with others and how well he is motivated.

It is well for the interviewer to keep clearly in mind whether he is dealing with objective or subjective data. To confuse them is misleading. Both can be checked to some extent, but in different ways. Objective facts can be checked directly; subjective facts can be checked, to some extent, by a measure of consistency. If a man says he is interested in collecting stamps, for example, he should have a collection of stamps to show his interest.

It was once thought of as a fact that a person found good in some fields was almost surely poor in others, rendering a natural compensation or balance. Good in arithmetic, poor in English; good in thinking, poor in physical dexterities; or so it was thought. Modern research has shown that the opposite is true. If a person is proficient in some area the chances are that he will also be good in some other. This is the principle of correlation. Of course no one is equally good in everything, but it sometimes helps, in evaluating a person, to establish his level of ability in one important factor and, then, examine other particulars to see to what extent they match, excel, or fall below the previously determined characteristic.

In examining facts it is useful to note that they always take place in a chain of related facts—of cause and effect—and that this chain can well be followed up. For example, the applicant is well educated. It is still worth knowing if he earned his education, if he wanted it, if it was thrust upon him, if he attempted to evade it, if he is continuing or not continuing it, if he has plans for educating himself for a good many years or for only a short time ahead.

Such facts as are collected and examined will not all be of the same value. Two areas, at least, require emphasis: the individual's past, since here is found the best indication we have as to his future; and the job itself and the way the facts of the interviewee's personality relate to the job requirements.

Are "the Facts" Really Facts?—Having separated the inferences and labeled them, we find a residue of fact. But are they really facts? That is, have they been reported or observed correctly? Memory always tends to be inaccurate even when intentions are of the best. Favorable personal stories are usually exaggerated. Details tend to slip away. Past experiences often become confused and mixed together. Observations in an interview are often unequally directed by suggestion and consequently untrue. There is an oft-quoted case in which 2,000 men were interviewed on their applications for lodging in New York City's Municipal Lodging House.[3] One interviewer found that 62 per cent of the men he talked to were destitute because of drink and 7 per cent because of hard times. Another interviewer found from the same sampling that 11 per cent were there because of liquor and 60 per cent because of hard times. Facts, then, should be determined carefully and checked in every possible way.

Kinds of Facts.—When we have carefully gathered facts before us, we must still differentiate between the kinds of facts. A major distinction is between objective facts and subjective facts.

Objective facts are the kind that can be verified directly. The applicant's age, his score on an intelligence test, the location of his home, the firm he previously worked for, and the job he held there, the number of years and the kind of training he has had, these are all objective facts.

The subjective facts reported in an interview are statements by the interviewee of his opinions, attitudes, and ambitions, etc. If the interviewee says that, in his opinion, a company that does much work at overtime rates is inefficient, that statement reports a subjective fact. An employee who reports that he mistrusts his foreman is stating (if sincere) a subjective fact. An individual who indicates that he requires seventy-five dollars a week to live on is stating a subjective fact. It is often

and his vote, if known, to suggest opinions to others. There is always the individual, even a judge, who will follow a leader, particularly if he believes he is securing his own position by doing so.

More Than One Applicant.—When there is only one applicant, his qualifications are compared to the job requirements as skilfully as possible, and he is either hired or rejected (a rating scale of some kind is often used). When there is more than one applicant, however, we need some techniques to compare them. Several approaches are suggested.

Simultaneous Group Comparison. The applicants may be called in at one time for a group interview, either following their individual interviews or without that step. In this case the judge or judges (usually there is more than one observer in a group interview) can compare all the applicants directly without memory loss. They may also stimulate one or another of the interviewees if they wish to determine in some specific ways how he contrasts with the others in the group. Group interviewing presents some stress for the interviewees and must be examined partly from this standpoint. Since it represents a special type of interviewing, we will postpone its consideration at this point to a later chapter in which it will be discussed in detail.

Rating Scale Evaluation. Another method of judging applicants is to make use of a rating scale and evaluate his characteristics as called for, either during the interview or immediately afterward. Such rating scales consist of a list of traits, each one scaled, with the various degrees described and often numerically evaluated. The interviewer then estimates the amount of each trait possessed by the candidate. Such a scale reduces general impressions to a manageable form, and has the further advantage that applicants need not be compared directly if there are memory or other factors that make this difficult. Each scale may be scored separately and a decision reached. (Rating scales will be considered further in Chapters 13 and 18.)

Methods of Making a Judgment

In all judgments, factors are compared or weighed like weights on a scale. We must now see what factors are to be compared in the judgments required of the interviewer and how this is to be done. In contrast to the personality of the interviewee, sized up in the interview, we have job requirements which are given in more or less detail, depending upon the circumstances. When we come to the task of weighing these two factors—the job requirements and the man—against each other, we find that the task is frequently complicated by the fact that there is more than one applicant to judge and that there may be more than one judge. The methods used generally are as follows.

More than One Judge.—The judgment may be made by one, two, or even more persons. It is cheaper and simpler to allow one man to make the selection, so, with jobs of lower grade, selection is nearly always done by one interviewer. In cases, too, where only one person need be satisfied with the new employee or where there is one person of considerable authority expressly interested in the particular interview, that person alone may make the choice.

In supervisory, sales, and executive jobs, selection is occasionally made by two or more persons. There are several advantages in this arrangement as well as some difficulties. The advantages are that the extraneous "personality-against-personality" bias is reduced since there are more individuals to thin it out. Again, the judges have been allowed to question the applicant and to approach him from more angles and points of view, thereby bringing out more information. As a further advantage, their votes can be counted and averaged. Often they discuss the man before voting and, in so doing, call attention to all points that might be of importance. The disadvantages are the greater cost, the difficulty of getting together at one time, and a judgment difficulty in cases where one of the judges has more prestige in the firm than do the others. There is some tendency for such a person's remarks,

qualifications into such parts as personality, past achievements, the degree to which he satisfies the technical aspects of the job requirements, or other divisions that seem logical to the judges. Each applicant is then ranked in order of merit on each division separately, and his rank is then counted. The ranks of the various divisions may be combined for a final score. The order of merit or rank judgment method, because of its simplicity, is probably the most widely used method of comparing several applicants.

The Validity of Judgments.—The choice of methods for making the judgment is a matter to be determined by the circumstances surrounding the interview situation. Satisfactory results will be obtained by any suitable method provided that proper evaluation has been given to the facts and inferences determined during the interview. In other words, sound judgments and just decisions are dependent as much on the weight of the information gleaned in the interview as in the method used to weigh it. Consequently we will direct our attention in the next few chapters to techniques for gathering the necessary information most effectively.

Paired Comparisons. Following the interviews the various
applicants may be compared one by one with each other. The
diagram below shows this method.

	A′	B′	C′
Applicant A		B A +	C A −
Applicant B	A B −		C B −
Applicant C	A C +	B C +	

The comparisons are made horizontally; the scores are
totaled vertically. Applicant A is not compared with himself
(A′) but with B′ and C′. Of A and B′, the latter seemed
better to the judge, so a plus mark is placed in the box BA
In comparing A with C′, the judge found A better, so a minus
sign is entered in the box CA. Moving to the second hori-
zontal row, we are ready to compare applicant B. As we have
already observed, B was considered better than A, so a minus
sign is entered in the AB box. And of course B is not com-
pared with himself, B′, so the center box is marked out. In
comparison with C′, B is found superior, so we enter a minus
in the CB box—second horizontal row. In comparing C with
A′ and with B′, C was considered inferior to both, so we
enter a plus in the AC box and in the BC box. Totaling our
scores vertically, we find that A received one plus and one
minus, B received two plusses, and C received two minus
marks. This scoring leaves B the top man. The paired-com-
parisons method we have just used has the handicap of be-
coming very cumbersome and time consuming if there are
many applicants.

Rank Order Comparison. The various applicants may be
interviewed separately, and, if they seem to meet the job re-
quirements, they can be compared with each other in what
is called an order of merit or rank judgment. By this method
the one who seems best can be put in No. 1 position, the
second best in No. 2 position, and third best in No. 3 position.
A refinement of this device is to break up each applicant's

the interviewer represents the company. He should not take advantage of this situation. For example, a male interviewer should not make personal remarks to a woman interviewee, nor should he shock the sensibilities of a naïve or timid beginner.

It might be well to recall here the principle of similars. Had it been practical, an interviewer who was similar to the interviewee in characteristics and interests would have been used since he would find it easier to bring about quick and ready understanding. That being impractical, the interviewer must adjust himself to the great variety of people he meets. He must not use a "highbrow" vocabulary on a working man; neither should he air his own opinions and experiences. He must not be cold and reserved, making the interviewee adjust to him. Rather he must mold himself somewhat to the other person's individuality even before he begins to ask questions.

Having learned many facts about the interviewee through his questions, the interviewer must guard all confidences as would a priest or psychiatrist. Not everything he learns will be confidential or harmful if repeated, but some information will be, so he must be on his guard to avoid repeating anything that might embarrass, confuse, or hurt his interviewee. He should not relate those awkward little accidents and slips of speech that make good stories but hurt people's feelings. One interviewer frequently told with great gusto of the young girl interviewee who, in telling of how she had been insulted declared, "I was so mad, I could have slapped the insulator." Unwittingly he told the story some time later in the presence of the girl who made the remark. This blunder started a chain reaction of criticism against him that he had considerable difficulty to quiet.

In summarizing the interviewer's attitude, we may describe it as a friendly one toward a new acquaintance. He can be helpful, not by hinting at answers, but by leading the discussion to topics of importance and by pointing out specific elements on which information is needed. In leading the way, he will usually ask questions; questions, in fact, upon which the success or failure of the interview may depend.

Chapter 6

ASKING QUESTIONS AND GIVING INFORMATION

When information is sought in an interview, it is always brought out by means of verbal questions—not through forms or questionnaires. (When these latter are used, they should be completed before the interview.) There are several different types of questions that the interviewer can ask, and we now propose to examine them to see what tools he may carry in his query kit. But first let us consider for a moment the attitude of the interviewer as he conducts the interrogation.

If he falls into the method of the prosecuting attorney, cross-examining the interviewee, he will probably destroy his interview. He must start under the assumption that the interviewee and he are two friendly acquaintances, talking over some problems of mutual interest. He must also assume the honesty and good intentions of the interviewee, and exert himself towards establishing friendliness and mutual understanding.

He usually approaches the interview realizing that he is the more disinterested of the two parties and knowing (from previously secured information) the subjects on which the conversation can most profitably concentrate. He should therefore attempt to direct the talk to the right points without assuming any dishonesty or using trickery to establish the truth and without giving hints as to the best things to say. His manner should be deliberate if not leisurely, permitting the interviewee all the time he needs to tell everything he feels essential to a true and fair statement.

The interviewer must also remember that the other party is not speaking to him by choice but is forced to do so because

88

importance. Such statements made in question form give the interviewee a chance to respond, to do something, to "break the ice" and get the interview under way. It is better, of course, if such questions can begin to bring information from the very beginning, but such a purpose must not interfere with the ease of answering this kind of question. One interviewer suggests that, in the case of experienced workers, their previous experience be the source of the initial, calming questions. "You have worked before, of course, haven't you? Were you employed in town here on your last job?" When interviewing students leaving high school and college it is suggested that they be given a chance to talk about their education—"I notice from your application blank that you have been a high school student. Was your school co-educational?" In the case of young people it is sometimes helpful to let them talk a little about their families. "Do you have any brothers and sisters?" "Do any of the others in your family go to work?"

After the interviewee is settled in his chair, has made a few casual remarks, and has had a chance to size up the interviewer, more searching questions can be asked. It is a good principle, however, to keep the questions easy until the interview is well under way in order to avoid breaking the thread of mutual understanding that has been established.

Directing and Redirecting Questions.—When the interviewer is ready to ask for real information, he can begin with simple questions that merely direct the interviewee to talk about some particular aspect of his life. "You have worked before, I see. Will you tell me what your last job was like?" If it is very necessary to explore this particular subject, or if the interviewee grows loquacious on details of no importance or goes off the track altogether, the interviewer may want to bring him back. "You were beginning to tell me about your last job, and I didn't understand your remark about the foreman. Will you please make that clear?" And later on perhaps: "Won't you please come back and explain further about your last job? You began to tell me something about the hours you had to work."

Kinds of Questions

We would do well in the beginning to notice that in all kinds of questions there are good ones and bad ones. The bad questions are the ambiguous ones that do not clearly indicate the kind of answer wanted and the multiple questions that ask several facts at once. An example of the ambiguous type is: "Have you ever experienced a situation where you found work was play?" A multiple question may be one such as: "What is your economic, financial, and educational status?" If the interviewer does not intend to waste time, the questions must point out clearly to the interviewee the direction the answers are to take.

We come now to the kinds of questions that may be asked. The following list will be discussed in the order given.

1. Quieting, rapport-building questions designed to win co-operation.
2. Directing and redirecting questions.
3. Challenging and arousing questions and statements.
4. Specific information and consistency questions—cross-examination.
5. Narrative and organizing questions.
6. Leading questions.
7. Embarrassing questions.
8. Stress questions.
9. Questions of opinion to probe emotions and attitudes.
10. Trade questions.
11. Thought and puzzle questions.

Quieting, Rapport-Building Questions Designed to Win Co-operation.—Frequently at the beginning of an interview and occasionally at other times when an interviewee becomes excited, questions are asked with the main objective of helping the person quiet down and gain control of himself. The primary requirement of these questions is that they be easy to answer. "Will you sit down?" "Did you have any difficulty finding your way here?" "Did you notice what a nice brisk day it is?" Often the answers to these questions are of little or no

board Hoover's train enroute to the West and was fortunate enough to get two hours alone with him. It was the chance of a lifetime, but Hoover wouldn't talk. The reporter tried one technique after another without success. The minutes flew by, and what promised to be an opportunity of a lifetime was apparently turning out to be a "dud." Then, more by luck than by design, the reporter questioned the accuracy of some statistics Hoover had given in a previous speech. At the charge, Hoover came to life. It was a challenge his engineering training would not let him pass. He explained the figures in detail and proved that they were correct. Then, having been aroused, he kept talking. The reporter had no difficulty the rest of the journey, and the promised opportunity he tried so hard to develop really did materialize.

In much the same way, the interviewer can challenge a person who refuses to talk, remembering, of course, to do it skilfully and follow up correctly lest the person's feelings be hurt and his good will lost to the company. Casual statements, such as: "Apparently you don't understand this," may start the talk flowing. Or even gentler, "I don't want to ask you to explain something you don't understand, so perhaps we'd better talk about something else." Sometimes the challenge can be sharp: "You don't seem to know what this is all about," or "If you don't want to tell me about your experience, there's no use in wasting time. I'll call someone who will tell me."

Whenever such challenging questions or statements are used, the interviewer must remember to heal all wounds before the interview is over. In some cases he may even apologize and take some of the blame on his own head. "I don't know what got into me to say such sharp things. I guess I'm a little tired today."

Narrative and Organizing Questions.—Sometimes, in the early part of the interview, but after the interviewee has gotten well under way, it is desirable to ask a few questions that require some organization of the answer. For instance: "Please tell me about your education. I want to know about all of it, so don't leave anything out. Tell me about all the education

Challenging and Arousing Questions and Statements.—
Some people do not seem able to say anything at all in an
interview—or don't want to—so the interviewer must arouse
them and get them talking. If he has been watching the inter-
viewee closely during his opening remarks, he will probably
already have some idea of why the person doesn't talk. Per-
haps he is inexperienced and timid. Perhaps he is a taciturn
working man with only a few words at his disposal. Perhaps
he doesn't know what to say, sitting down, to a white-collar
man. Or perhaps he is introverted, subject to moods, and just
not ready to talk.

If the individual is timid, he probably needs some help
more than anything else. The interviewer can try talking a
little himself, explaining some of the information he needs
and telling why he needs to be told such things. After a few
moments of such discourse and a very easy question or two
to begin with, the timid person may feel at home and acquire
enough confidence to give the information called for. Another
technique is to learn the person's interests or hobbies and to
talk about these for a while.

If the individual is a taciturn working man who is not accus-
tomed to talking, he may respond to the invitation, "Show
me how you do this," or, "Take this pencil and show me on
paper what you mean." It is usually easiest for such a person
to answer specific questions, such as: "About how big is a
14-gauge wire?" "When would you use that size wire instead
of a smaller one?" "When a wire is insulated, how do you
cut off the insulation without damaging the wire inside?"
Often, after answering specific questions such as these, the
working man will be ready to talk more freely. It is always
possible to try questions regarding his hobbies and home life
too, but it is essential to avoid the impression of prying into
his personal affairs beyond the scope of pertinent information.

If the person is introverted or morose or just not in a talk-
ing mood, he may be aroused by some definite challenge. A
well known example of this solution was the method a re-
porter used in getting an interview from Herbert Hoover
during one of his presidential campaigns. He managed to

before he goes on an inconsistency hunt. Memories are weak, and if a person is pressed for specific details and exact dates from the long past, he may make a number of inaccurate statements with no intention of deceiving. Frequently the dishonest person can be distinguished by the number and importance of his inconsistencies, or by his confusion when he is asked to explain them. Some brazen deceivers, however, do not become confused. No guarantee can be given that deceptions can be ferreted out in the interview and confessions obtained; otherwise there would be no need for the extensive research put into lie detectors. On the other hand, a liar who is caught in an interview, and who must talk and answer questions if he is to gain his objective, is in rather hot water. A skilful interviewer can frequently expose him.

Specific questions, however, do not serve their greatest usefulness in tracing down falsehoods. Their prime value is found in the everyday necessity for completing a story. After the interview, the interviewee departs and is often difficult to reach. If the interviewer has waited until after the interview to check his information, he may find himself lacking important details that must be filled in. What is the man's telephone number? Did he have particular experience in business correspondence which is a minor factor but required by the job specifications? Was his war service a matter of days, months, or years? After the interviewee is gone, it may be a matter of considerable labor and time to get particular information that could have been obtained in a moment if the interviewer had been careful enough to ask for it.

Leading Questions.—These are questions that suggest a particular answer, and they may be asked to get some idea of the suggestibility of the interviewee. A person considered for a responsible position should not answer too glibly or quickly just because a possible answer has been prepared for him. If a number of such questions are prepared with reasonably good —but not the best—answers suggested, it is sometimes possible to tell how independent and careful the interviewee is.

Leading questions are usually attacked because they are so

you've ever had." If the interviewee wanders about unsystematically in his answer, he gets a minus for his handling of this question. But perhaps he says, "Well, I received some of my training at home from my parents; some of it is formal training I received in school and college; some of it I learned for myself. Suppose I tell you about each of these in turn." Such an answer will earn a plus mark.

There are many ways in which a person may organize his work history or his explanation of "everything he is interested in." This ability to organize one's thoughts is a valuable characteristic, and one which the interviewer may wish to investigate for certain kinds of positions.

Specific Information and Consistency Questions.—Memory is somewhat more accurate in dealing with the narrative type of questions we have just discussed than it is with particular questions. However, there are often particular bits of needed information that the narrative answers do not give. Consequently, as the interview progresses, it may be necessary to fill in the neglected topics by asking direct questions. For instance: "What year was it that you were graduated from high school?" "Was the work you refer to in the Southwest done in California?" "You say you went on a 'binge' after the war and spent all the money you had saved; would you care to estimate just how much money that was?"

The interviewer begins the interview assuming that the interviewee is going to be honest and sincere. If, during the interview, he begins to doubt that he has been told only the truth and all the essential truths, he can examine the story he has heard to check it for inconsistencies. One good technique is to ask specific questions of the kind we are discussing here to see if the various parts, when put together, add up to an impossibility. The interviewer will seldom have to say that he suspects the interviewee of dishonesty. All he need do is ask for explanations of inconsistencies until the person telling the story realizes he has trapped himself in his own statements.

The interviewer, however, should have some good reason for suspecting dishonesty, usually derived from other sources,

The use of such questions is predicated on the theory that certain types of workers, salesmen, and supervisors must do their work under stress, and that certain questions tend to reveal how the interviewee is likely to respond under working conditions.

Occasionally the rules for stress are given as, "Don't hit him or kick him, but say anything to him that you wish." Efforts are made to humiliate the individual, to make him angry, to confuse him, to ridicule him. The interviewer may use several helpers in applying this technique. Stress should never, of course, be used at the end of the interview; enough time must be left to repair the emotional damage and to end the interview on a friendly note. Stress interviews had considerable use in the Army, where the individual was "in for the duration" and consequently had to accept whatever came his way. It is probable that in business, however, stress should be applied very carefully in an interview, and as a rule only by those interviewers who have had considerable experience. In such cases it may reveal aspects of personality that are not revealed when all questioning is quiet and friendly.

Questions of Opinion to Probe Emotions and Attitudes.— Some consider attitudes as the very core of interview subject matter, so the interviewer should be ready to investigate them. Often there will be some attitudes of particular interest to the company like an individual's attitude toward communism, or toward overtime work or traveling on the job. At times the interviewee can be asked these questions directly. "What do you think of a life spent traveling around the country; would you find it interesting or boring?" "What do you think of an individual who spends most of his evenings catching up on his work or preparing for advancement?" "Do you believe that all avowed Communists should be deported?" By making the questions somewhat extreme, it is often possible to "get a rise out of" the interviewee and start him talking. Once he has started to express himself on a topic, it is usually possible to determine about how extreme or mild his opinions are. In some cases it may be desirable to be more subtle. "What is

often used unconsciously by unwary or oversympathetic interviewers. "Our secretaries, you know, have a great deal of detail work to do; I suppose you do like detail work, don't you?" "Do you want to work in Room A, or would you rather work with the more successful people in Room B?"

The interviewer should never suggest an answer to his question unless he is doing it deliberately with a definite purpose. Suggestible people are often easy to supervise and are co-operative, but they are not apt to be good leaders and supervisors. Where leading questions are used to examine suggestibility, some of the suggested answers included should be very poor. Occasionally interviewees who are not suggestible may still respond with every suggested answer with the intention of getting the job. The interviewer must be alert for such individuals.

Embarrassing Questions.—These include such questions as asking a woman her age or asking a man his salary on a previous job. The only excuse for asking these and other personal questions is that the information is needed. Under such circumstances the interviewer must get the facts. The principal precaution that he must observe is never to ask for such information earlier in the interview than is necessary. The interviewee may be upset, and the flow of information disturbed. For this reason, all possible necessary information should be obtained before embarrassing questions are broached. The next precaution is to explain the reason for asking the questions. Having taken these two precautions, the interviewer may next experiment with the form in which he asks such questions, and use that introduction or form with which he gets the best results. These questions seldom make much trouble if they are handled in proper sequence with simplicity and frankness.

Stress Questions.—Embarrassing questions might be considered stress questions except that they are asked only when certain information is required. Stress questions, on the other hand, are usually framed, not for the answers but for the sake of making the interviewee respond under some kind of stress.

2. Question: Where is the combustion chamber?
   Answer: Between flue sheet and fire box.
3. Question: What usually causes tubes to blister?
   Answer: Dirt, mud, sediment, scale.

Thought Questions.—The ability to think is better measured by test than by interview, but in cases where the interviewer has no tests at his disposal or no opportunity to give them, he may wish to investigate orally the interviewee's thought processes. The main difficulties of this procedure lie in the fact that the interviewer is apt to compare the interviewee's thought processes with his own—always a hazardous procedure. A second problem is that of mental set. It is very difficult for some people to take a thinking set in an interview. When a thought problem is asked verbally, moreover, an improper set may be induced in the interviewee by the way the question is asked.

An example of mental set and the difficulties it can create are illustrated in the following thought question—one quite popular with nine-year-olds but which many adults cannot answer: "When is a rock not a rock?" The answer to this puzzle should not be given here. Every reader should solve it for himself, in order to see how difficult it may be for him to find an answer that will be obvious when he hears it. The answer is (of course): a rock is not a rock when it is a shamrock.

Some people would call such a question a catch question or perhaps, a very foolish one. Yet it is one that merely misdirects the mental set. Most people will search through their memories of broken, crushed, thrown, and fallen rocks for some glimmer of the relationship which will satisfy the requirements of the problem. Of course they will never find the answer in this way because they are searching in the wrong direction.

The moral of this example is that thought questions which really measure a person's ability to think are very difficult to present in the interview. When such questions are attempted, the interviewer should prepare them carefully before the inter-

your opinion of the trial and sentence of Harry Bridges?" "Mr. Hoffman, former president of Studebaker, has hardly seen his home for the last two years; do you think it worthwhile to attract so many responsibilities that your personal time is all used up?"

Just as an interviewer examines a job description before he meets applicants for that job, so he should consider the attitudes he may want to explore before he goes into the interview. People have attitudes toward all of their possessions, activities, friends, and work. It has already been suggested that attitudes may be explored through a number of approaches. The individual's clothing, automobile, and life insurance; his dancing, fishing, church and theater attendance; his ideas of business, politics, and philosophy. Any of these may be entrances into the sentiments or complexes which business men usually call attitudes.

It is obvious that attitudes are not subject matter for a screening or short "weeding out" interview. To investigate them in any meaningful way requires time, for one does not necessarily talk about the job but often goes far afield when he is exploring attitudes. If enough time is given to their exploration, the interviewer may find himself well repaid. However, unless he can give his interviewee plenty of time—in some cases, as much as an hour and a half—he had better stay in shallower water.

Trade Questions.—In some situations an interviewer must question skilled craftsmen who know more about their work than he does. To enable the interviewer to determine the extent of the knowledge of such men, trade questions together with the answers have been made available for nearly every trade. In questioning a boilermaker, for example, such questions as the following [1] could be asked.

1. Question: Why is caulking done?
   Answer: Make steamtight (stop leak) (tighten sheet).

[1] Andrew Lonn, Jr., et al, *Interview Aids and Trade Questions for Employment Offices* (New York Harper & Bros., 1936), p. 31.

some simpler job. Individuals who will "take anything" will often make an attempt first to get one of the most competitive and sought after positions in the firm. There are others, particularly among those who think success is 98 per cent luck, who will take a chance on their "lucky day," or wearing their "lucky necktie." Such a person will attempt to get some position for which they have no qualifications. These people realize that it does not pay to show their colors too early in such missions, so they will maneuver a bit, if possible, before they tell where their real interest lies. Jobs are sometimes actually misrepresented, too, by employees who bring in their friends or who report job opportunities in their communities, whether or not they understand the job requirements.

It is therefore necessary for the interviewer always to find out very quickly—in the first few moments of the interview—if the applicant has come for a job that is available. Usually that is done by naming the job, but sometimes by briefly describing it. "Let's see; we have an opening for a janitor this morning. That's the job you are applying for, isn't it?" Until both parties agree on the job that is the subject of the particular discussion, no real progress can be made in the interview.

It is always a loss to have an applicant accept work under false assumptions, then leave after one or two weeks. Accepting a job is quite an important decision to any person, especially to a young person who may feel that the job under consideration will set the direction of his career. Anyone who anticipates becoming a permanent employee—remaining on a job for five, ten or fifteen years—will want to be reasonably certain he is making a correct decision. Of course there are persons who, because of need, will take the job they don't really want, but even here they will choose as well as they can.

In order to bring in employees who will stay as long as possible, the interviewer should give applicants all the essential information about the job during the employment interview. But what may be considered essential? It is best to determine what the applicant thinks is essential by asking him. "Is there anything, now, that you would like to know about

view and try them out a number of times to find out how they work. They should be straightforward questions, not the kind called puzzles, since the essence of most puzzles lies in the misdirection of attention or mental set. Such questions are no measure of a person's ability to think.

Giving Information in an Employment Interview

When the interviewer has obtained all the information he needs, he must remember that the interviewee may have some questions he would like to ask. Then, too, toward the end of the interview, the matter of ending on a friendly note should be effected. In the following discussion we will consider the information that will probably be given in an employment interview since that is the most standard and can be discussed to best advantage. We will note, too, when to give this information.

There are three prime reasons for giving information during an employment interview, and these reasons dictate to some extent both the amount given and the time at which it should be given. The three reasons are: (1) to give the interviewee a clear understanding of the kind of available job or jobs he is being considered for; (2) to give him enough information about the job and the working conditions to enable him to make up his mind on whether or not he wants the work; and (3) to begin the orientation of the applicant who is hired. Let us consider each of these.

Identifying the Available Job.—Every now and then an applicant will appear for the purpose of getting a job that is not open, and will disdain the available job, which the unwary interviewer may assume he came for. This call may be due to untamed ambition, belief in luck, or the way that job information gets bruited about. Some people will apply for an office manager's job even though they have not the least qualification for it. Such people, in order to get the opportunity to talk and (they believe) persuade the interviewer, are quite willing to let him assume for a while that they are asking for

you are not qualified for the job." Consequently, the best time to give information that will enable the applicant to determine whether he really wants the job is about the time the interviewer has decided he is definitely interested in the applicant. Some other topics that the interviewer should consider explaining at this time, whether or not they are asked, are the following:

Method of wage administration	Salary scale
Opportunity for promotion	Method of rating
Vacations	Holidays
Working hours	Pensions
Group insurance	

Orienting the Employed Applicant.—Most of the task of orienting the new employee is the responsibility of the foreman or supervisor under whom he works, but the interviewer can usually begin giving some of the information that belongs under this classification. He may introduce the new employee to a number of the people with whom he will work, particularly those in the personnel department. He may tell where most of the people buy or eat their lunches; where the rest rooms are; where smoking is permitted. If he can be helpful with suggestions about transportation to and from work or about parking privileges for employees' cars, he will explain these. Every firm will have its own bit of general information which new employees need to know before they feel at home. It is with this kind of information, and perhaps a bit of encouragement, that the interviewer leaves the new employee.

In cases where the applicant could not be employed, it is often possible to give him other kinds of information as the interview comes to an end. If an applicant is young and lacks a particular skill (which prevented his getting the job), it is often helpful to tell him so, together with information on how the skill can be acquired. Occasionally an interviewer can recognize that the applicant is looking for a job for which he is less qualified than for other types of work. It may be possible to point this fact out to the individual and direct him to a type of work where his opportunities are greater. Sometimes,

this job?" Because of his past experiences the interviewee may consider important something that would not occur to the interviewer. "What happens if a person comes in late once in a while?" "Is it possible to get off early occasionally to do some shopping?" "Would I be expected to do overtime work often?" "Can I save up my vacation time for three or four years, as they do in civil service, and take a long vacation all at once?"

Sometimes it may be sufficient to answer the applicant's questions, provided everything is clearly understood. The questions about coming in late and leaving early should be tied down more specifically, unless neither is allowed at all. What is meant by "a little late" and "occasionally"? Usually, however, it is well for the interviewer to make sure that the applicant understands some of the important factors of the job which may be distinctive to this company. "You may know that we don't pay much attention to race prejudices here, and you may be placed at the same cutting bench with a Negro; is that all right with you?" "The supervisor under whom you will work is very skilful and well liked by most of those who know him, but his tongue is a little sharp at times; do you think you can take it?" "When Christmas season comes around, overtime is required; please don't take this job unless you feel you can work five evenings a week for the two weeks preceding Christmas."

Salary, of course, should never be overlooked at this time. It may not be necessary at this point in the interview to reach a final precise agreement, but the general range should be made known and agreed upon. Interviews often run quite a long time, only to break up because of a disagreement on salary. Occasionally, the salary can be specifically stated almost at the beginning of the interview, at the time the job under discussion is named.

As a general rule the interviewer should make up his mind about the applicant's qualifications before giving him much job information. It is unnecessarily embarrassing to tell an applicant all about a position and have him enthusiastically accept it, only to say, after a little fact finding, "But I'm afraid

Chapter 7

SPECIAL TASKS FOR THE INTERVIEWER

Although every interview should be a skilfully conducted conversation, that, by itself, is not enough. As has already been indicated, the interviewer is also responsible for achieving certain specific objectives, the most common of which, and the primary function of the employment interview, is the measurement of the interviewee. The interviewer may also have other tasks, such as motivating and persuading, teaching, directing, disciplining, and adjusting emotional problems. Each of these objectives or tasks will now be examined in order.

Interview Measurement

All employment interviews imply some kind of measurement apart from the use of tests. According to a survey made by Jones[1] in the State of Mississippi, 161 of 169 firms reporting used the interview in employment. By contrast, only forty used any form of test in addition to the interview. Even where tests and other devices are in use, they supplement rather than displace the interview. For companies which use no other measuring device, the interview must be an omnibus, all-service instrument. For companies which use standardized application blanks, itemized reference systems, and employment tests, the interview can render a specialized service, functioning in a way most suited to its natural character.

Let us now examine the interview to determine how well it can carry out the function of measurement. In doing so, a number of questions come to mind.

[1] P. M. Jones, "Personnel Policies and Practices Survey," *Personnel Journal,* XX (1941), 204.

particularly with young people, applicants will apply for work that is out of season An explanation of the seasonal nature of the work will help them Occasionally, when a person can not be employed, the interviewer will know of some other firm where he has a chance In all these cases, if the interviewer can help the rejected applicant with a little useful information the firm will usually be paid much more in good will than the cost of the small amount of time invested

Terman has made some observations and suggestions[2] for the use of his test that apply equally well in business interviewing. It is not enough, he points out, that the measurement be able to discriminate between extremes; to tell a genius from a feeble-minded person may be desirable, but not particularly difficult. What is needed is some method that will point out smaller intermediate differences, as on a scale. In business it may be to separate the person who can do the job well from the person who can do it better, and him from the person who can do it best.

A common difficulty encountered in estimating people, according to Terman, is to separate ability from age. There is a normal tendency to feel that age and ability are closely related. Since this is not always so, age is often a disturbing element in appraising abilities. Sound interviewing techniques are required to separate the two and to evaluate ability alone.

There is an equal difficulty in separating ability from personality. Decayed teeth, falling hair, dirty fingernails, ill-fitting clothing, and unfastened buttons lead the casual observer to underestimate intelligence. Beautiful eyes, a lovely skin, lithe movements, athletic build, vivacity, and gaiety can cause equal overestimation of intelligence. The same difficulties appear when we judge abilities in business.

Abilities Must Be Measured While in Use.—Terman also suggests some general precautions on administering the intelligence-measuring interview which well can be observed in business interviewing. To begin with, he points out, it is impossible to measure ability unless it is being exercised, and this exertion in an interview requires attention and effort. It is the person being interviewed, of course, who must give attention and assert himself. The interviewer, however, is responsible for arousing and directing these responses. It is up to him, too, to arrange the situation that will stimulate the activities he wishes to measure.

[2] Louis M. Terman, *The Measurement of Intelligence* (New York: Houghton Mifflin Co., 1916).

1. To what extent is measurement by interview possible?
2. What characteristics are covered best by the interview?
3. Is special training needed for such interviewing?
4. What are the best interview techniques for measurement?
5. Can honesty, industry, perseverance, and the intention to remain permanently with the firm be determined?

To What Extent Is Measurement Possible?—Theoretically the basis of all measurement is comparison to some standard. No simple, arbitrary standards for people exist, of course, but we can construct them. We can set up requirements for a job and apply them in the form of standardized or similar questions to all applicants for that particular job. This measurement is not as simple or objective as measuring distance with a yardstick, but it is a method of measurement. It suggests that the impartial comparison of the capacities of a number of individuals with a well-devised set of job requirements will indicate the most desirable individual.

Practically applied, the most famous of such measurements is the Terman Binet Intelligence Test. Just before 1900, Binet was asked by the Paris school authorities to test the children and find those who could not learn quickly enough to repay the city for the money spent on them. Binet gathered what we might call a number of job samples and assembled them into problems resembling job requirements. The jobs he visualized were those of being normal three-, four-, five-year-old school children (and so on through the school ages) and thus able to do the school work assigned to them. The job samples were characteristic problems of children in each age category. These problems were presented by oral questioning in standardized form. Every question was memorized or read by the interviewer and asked of every child in exactly the same way. Binet was so successful that within a few years his interview-measurement of intelligence was translated and copied in several countries. In the United States, Terman of Stanford University revised it for use in this country. At the present time, the Terman-Binet Test is used from coast to coast.

ment, we come to a hodge-podge of opinion that at first seems to defy classification. Hollingworth astonished the business world in 1929 by reporting a study in which twelve sales managers attempted to choose from among fifty-seven applicants with such conflicting results that the best and the worst were mixed, Hollingworth said, almost as though they had been winnowed by chance.[3] Subsequent criticism has pointed out that Hollingworth's sales managers were working without benefit of job descriptions or interview training, but the belief that the interview could select with some accuracy was shaken and has never quite been recovered.

Following studies provided conflicting results. Scott had six sales managers interview thirty-six applicants.[4] These sales managers could not agree on putting twenty-eight of these in either the upper or lower half of their group. Snow[5] had a psychologist and six sales managers interview twelve applicants for work as truck drivers. Here the interviewers managed only to achieve some agreement on the two best and the two worst drivers. In none of these three experiments, however, were the sales managers trained for interviewing. The interviews were unplanned, and, in the first two experiments, the interviewers did not even have job specifications for the particular job.

If, however, we restrict our observations to experiments on interview validity in which the interviewers were carefully trained for what they were doing, the results are better. Several times it has been demonstrated that intelligence can be estimated reasonably well in a typical interview by men who are familiar with what intelligence is supposed to be. In one study,[6] Snedden asked questions involving a difficult vocabulary, such as: "What kind of work have you done involving

[3] Harry L. Hollingworth, *Vocational Psychology and Character Analysis* (New York: Appleton Century-Crofts, Inc., 1929), p. 116.

[4] W. D. Scott, *Advertising and Selling Magazine*, October, 1915, pp. 5-6, 94-96.

[5] A. J. Snow, "An Experiment in the Validity of Judging Human Ability," *Journal of Applied Psychology*, VIII (1924), 339-46.

[6] D. Snedden, "Measuring General Intelligence by Interview," *Psychological Clinic*, XIX (1930), 131-34.

What Characteristics Are Best Measured?—Both theory and practice indicate that, under proper circumstances, the measurement of intelligence by interview is possible. Since measurement in the business interview has not been as successful as the Terman-Binet interview, however, we must examine the circumstances. If there were but one job in industry with but one set of human requirements to be fulfilled satisfactorily, measurement interviews in business might be patterned directly on the Terman-Binet test. In this test, every question is planned in advance, standardized, memorized, and its measuring ability determined. The measuring requirements in business and industry, however, because there are so many different jobs, vary so much that a more flexible technique is required. There are literally thousands of different job descriptions, each representing a situation that requires the possession of certain particular abilities. To validate every question that should be asked of candidates for every job would be an endless procedure.

Because of this diversity of jobs and job requirements it seems desirable to pare down the measuring aspects of business interviews whenever possible. A common statement to this end is that any characteristic that can be objectively measured had better be removed from interview estimate. This is never achieved in smaller companies where facilities are not available for supplementary testing, but it is a valid goal. Intelligence can be tested better by a standardized test form than it can be estimated by the average interviewer. Many job skills can be tested. Job information also can usually be measured by test.

A listing of characteristics best suited to measurement by test and those by interview are presented in Chapter 14. Here we may summarize that the characteristics best suited to determination by interview are: (1) sources of objective information, (2) attitudes and opinions, (3) interests, (4) emotional adjustments, (5) ambitions and objectives.

Is Special Training Necessary?—When we return to the question of interviews that have demonstrated good measure-

agreed very well in their decisions, and their work was considered a useful contribution.

Morse and Hawthorne,[9] relating the experience of the Los Angeles City Civil Service Commission, found that selection without the interview led to many complaints from supervisors. Interviews alone were useful, and interviews supported by objective tests provided still better predictions. Taylor[10] reported that a twenty-minute interview by a committee of three persons was valuable in selecting medical students at Drake University. Putney[11] described a case in which soldiers were chosen from their units, some at random and others by interview, at the Aircraft Warning Unit Training Center, Drew Field, Florida. Of those selected at random, 29 per cent completed the course, while 84 per cent of those chosen by interview were successful. McMurry[12] and Hovland and Wonderlic[13] find increased interviewing success following the use of a patterned or standardized interview.

It would be too much to say that interviews have been found highly accurate measuring devices in business. It is, however, correct to say that some success in measurement has been demonstrated and that by employing the proper measures, such as those suggested below, the evaluating interview may be a very useful instrument.

1. It is always desirable, whenever possible, to support the interview with test results and with any other objective information obtainable.
2. It is always desirable to have placement interviewers trained for their work.

[9] M. T. Morse and J. W. Hawthorne, "Some Notes on Oral Examinations," *Public Personnel Review*, 1946-47, pp. 15-18.

[10] Grant Taylor, "The Personal Interview in the Selection of Medical Students," *Journal of the Association of American Medical Colleges*, XXIII (1948), 171-75.

[11] Richard W. Putney, "Validity of the Placement Interview," *Personnel Journal*, XXVI (1947), 144-45.

[12] R. N. McMurry, "Validating the Patterned Interview," *Personnel*, XXIII, No. 4 (1947), 263-72.

[13] C. I. Hovland and F. E. Wonderlic, "Prediction of Success from a Standardized Interview," *Journal of Applied Psychology*, XXIII (1939), 537-46.

pertinacity?" His results have the comparatively high accuracy of a validity of .82 as compared with tests.

Another successful experiment, and one particularly valuable because of its technique, was that of Dr. Joseph Hanna [7] Dr. Hanna, the interviewer, estimated the intelligence of fifty-four applicants for the Personal Counseling Service at the West Side YMCA in New York City. His estimates were then compared with the scores on two intelligence tests taken by each of the applicants. Dr. Hanna agreed with the tests as well as the tests agreed with each other. The results were: Dr. Hanna versus Test 1, correlation .71; Dr. Hanna versus Test 2, correlation .66; Test 1 versus Test 2, correlation .77.

The criterion used by Dr. Hanna was internal consistency among cues, and his principal cues were as follows. *Suggesting high intelligence:* (1) reported outstanding specific aptitudes such as in mathematics, music, etc.; (2) reported high scholarship; (3) conversational ability; (4) good habits of application; (5) good appearance. *Suggesting low intelligence:* (1) low scholarship; (2) taciturn, uncommunicating behavior; (3) mediocre reading habits; (4) early specialized courses; (5) emotional maladjustment; (6) overidentification with narrow interests; (7) failure to finish courses. In checking his results Dr. Hanna found there had been some tendency to overestimate the intelligence of his younger subjects and underestimate the intelligence of his older subjects. Reported high scholarship standing was the most important single one that led to a number of errors.

Rundquist [8] reported a study involving 1,359 officers made during the war by the Adjutant General's Office. The emphasis in this experiment was on social reactions during the interview. The five interviewers were carefully briefed, and then required to interview each officer independently. Later their ratings were discussed and combined. The interviewers

[7] Joseph V Hanna, "Estimating Intelligence by Interview," *Educational and Psychological Measurement,* X (Autumn, 1950), 420 30

[8] E A Rundquist, "Development of an Interview for Selection Purposes" in G. A. Kelly (ed.), *New Methods in Applied Psychology* (College Park, Md University of Maryland, 1947), pp 85 95

tion of organizing and patterning employment interviews is indicated. On the other hand, a completely standardized or patterned interview with specifically worded questions which must always be asked in the same way is not of much value unless the questions for every different job are of proven worth. To determine the merit of such questions would require a prohibitive amount of statistical work and the development of objective measures of success on the job that many small companies could not afford and large companies might not find profitable.

The Interaction Chronograph. E. D. Chapple working at Yale and M. I. T. developed a time-measuring apparatus, or interaction chronograph, to measure the time elements in the way one person adjusts to another. The theory was that time was the only objective factor in the interview and so deserved special attention. The machine produces ten columns of figures, giving such data as how often each person starts talking during the interview, how long he continues talking, how long he is silent, how often he interrupts, how often he fails to respond. The purpose of securing this information is to determine something of the interviewee's personality and temperament. The chronograph gives no indication of intelligence or special aptitudes.

The users of the Chapple Chronograph, mostly department stores, claim good results. In addition to the regular interviewer, a machine operator is required, and of course the machine itself must be secured. Moreover, results must be validated for every job in every different situation. Obviously, apparatus of this kind must prove itself, and its application now covers only an infinitesimal fraction of measurement interviewing.

Can Honesty and Similar Subjective Factors Be Determined in the Interview?—Interviewers are often told to find out, so far as they can, whether applicants are honest, persevering, hard working, and desirous of becoming permanent employees. Many experts, however, say that such characteristics cannot be determined in the interview at all. It is probably true that

3 It is always helpful to validate a particular interviewer, that is, to allow him to follow up his selections and learn of their success or failure, and the reasons

4 It is always wise for an employment interviewer to be skeptical of his power to evaluate people and to look for all possible help from objective data and the opinions of other interviewers

What Are the Best Interview Techniques for Measurement? —It has also been found that the measurement aspect of an interview increases as it becomes standardized One of the most successful attempts to develop the interview as a measuring device was reported by Hovland and Wonderlic [14] on work done for the Household Finance Corporation These men began with the premise that the employment interview needed a two fold development to become a sound measuring instrument It required, first, more standardization of procedure and, second, an efficient use of rating scales to record judgments immediately and make them effective In order to accomplish this double objective, they developed what they termed The Diagnostic Interviewer's Guide (For an examination of this guide, see Chapter 13)

Results of the patterned interview, reported by McMurry,[15] also indicate that the interview is a sound technique for judging In a study of 587 men working for the Link Belt Company, a reasonably high agreement was found (correlation 68) between interviewers' ratings and those made by foremen one and one half years later In a study at the White Motor Aero Mayflower Plant in Indianapolis, the job success of 108 men selected by patterned interview was determined These men were followed through an 11 week training program and out on the road as drivers There was substantial agreement (correlation 61) between the results of the patterned employment interviews and subsequent supervisor's ratings

The case for the patterned interview is strong as against the old unplanned interview, and some development in the direc-

14 Ibid
15 Loc cit

inconsistencies, it is helpful to use questions with simple factual answers or those that can be answered with "yes" or "no."

Dr. Kinsey, author of the treatise on the sexual behavior of men, had to consider the question of honesty of answers to personal and embarrassing questions as a major problem. He developed a technique that may be used in the employment situation. The interviewer should realize, however, that although Dr. Kinsey got results with his method, its actual validity or the truthfulness of the answers were never determined. The method he employed was to assume the interviewee's participation in every sexual activity unless it was specifically denied and to ask questions so rapidly that the interviewee would not have time to think up plausible rationalizations of untruthful denials. To make use of this method, the interviewer would have to prepare a set of questions to use in rapid-fire order, each question subtly assuming the interviewee's "guilt." For instance: "How soon do you think you will have enough experience with us to move on to some better job?" or "do you think you can adjust to our ways very quickly so we gain some advantage from having you before you must leave?" "Have you thought out your next step after taking this job?" "Where will you use the experience you hope to obtain from us?"

The point system in selecting salesmen by weighted application blank [16] might be used to investigate the subjective factors we have been discussing, although most of the work involved in this method is done outside the interview. This method is based upon the study of the characteristics found in good and poor salesmen. These characteristics are evaluated in points, depending upon the frequency of their occurrence among the successful and absence in the unsuccessful —or vice versa. Applicants are questioned about the characteristics for which values have been established, and their probable desirability is measured in terms of the scores they accumulate.

[16] See T. L. Rosenstein, *Scientific Selection of Salesmen* (New York: McGraw Hill Book Co., Inc., 1944).

no interviewer can guarantee to determine such characteristics, but there is no doubt that he often finds out a good deal about them. There are several methods that can be used and which we will enumerate and examine. The interviewer may, (1) check his applicant's references, (2) examine his past, (3) observe his statements for consistency, (4) use the Kinsey system, or (5) use the point system.

When references, particularly previous employers, can be reached by telephone and asked specific, blunt questions regarding the applicant's honesty, habits of work, or perseverance, useful replies are often received.

The interviewer has numerous means of investigating the applicant's past. Again he may ask questions of the references. He can look back over the previous experience recorded on the application blank, since an interviewee's past will often provide strong evidence on the questions at hand. If an individual worked fifteen years at his previous job there is no guarantee that he will stay on his next job, but the evidence suggests it.

A person who is straightforward and sincere is usually consistent in his statements, while the person attempting to "put something over" is often inconsistent. So the interviewer can watch for inconsistencies. There are a number of ways to do this. He can ask himself if the interviewee's statements are consistent with the facts. For example: A young man applies for a job as clerk in a shoe store. Questioning brings out that he is a graduate engineer, and the interviewer knows that engineering jobs are difficult to find at the moment. Or a man who owns his own home applies for work in an area where his commutation to and from the job will be very time-consuming. The man, however, does not wish to sell his home and relocate. If either of these individuals insisted that they wished to become permanent employees, their statements would seem inconsistent with their factual backgrounds. Inconsistencies may appear between a person's various statements. A simple example is the young woman who says at one moment that she was born in 1920, and a little later reports that she is twenty-two years old. When looking for

viewer with longer experience in the firm can often reassure them.

On a deeper level, motivation requires some knowledge of human nature. Simple encouragement is not always sufficient to enable a worker to overcome the difficulties with which he is faced. If an individual is in some frustrating competition with circumstances, for instance, encouragement may do less good than analysis. A person will ram his head against a stone wall only so many times, no matter how much he is motivated, before he wants to examine the wall.

Given a situation where motivation has a chance to operate, the person applying the encouragement will need some knowledge of inherited and learned wants. The inherited are such wants as thirst, hunger, sex, rest, and certain comfortable postures while at work. Social tendencies and self-esteem are probably learned wants, based on inherited drives.

The social and self-esteem desires include such urges as aggression in a credit-winning situation, submission in the face of mystery or danger, curiosity, and sociability. Among other needs are that of having a neat and orderly environment, finishing what one is doing, understanding the significance of what one is doing, and knowing one's progress toward a goal. The significance of need-learning is that individuals learn to need different things, so it is necessary to know something about an individual personally in order to arouse him adequately. An analogy is found in the field of advertising and selling. Advertising depends for its appeal upon inherited needs, and broadcasts the same stimulus to the whole public. The good salesman, on the other hand, wants to know his individual prospect—whether he is touchy about his golf score, proud of his son's achievement in school, or sensitive about his personal appearance. He then tailors his appeal to suit the individual circumstances.

Individual need-learning, when not understood, may make people seem peculiar. Such is the case of the man who refused to come to work by a direct, convenient bus route and insisted on a slow, inconvenient trolley. This seeming peculiarity turned out to be connected with an automobile accident he

The same technique could be followed to examine honesty, permanency, or industry The first step would be to determine, among those who have been employed, the characteristics of the industrious as contrasted with the lazy, the permanent as contrasted with the floaters, the honest as against the dishonest Older people and those with families, for instance, are known to be more stable than the young and unmarried Among some religious groups, honesty and thrift have been found more prevalent than in the general population Such factors could be determined by a company among its own employees, and questions bearing on items for which values have been established then asked of each applicant His probable desirability would be measured in terms of the score he accumulates

As a concluding statement it would be well to point out that measurement interviews appear to be well established, but that skill and care are required in their use A degree of patterning and standardization seems desirable Also, although honesty and subjective factors cannot be said to be measured, they can often be determined to a useful extent

Motivation

Motivation can be employed at different levels, depending upon the situation and one's knowledge of human nature On a simple level, motivation can be a plain matter of friendly encouragement Such occasions are those where the trouble is timidity, as in the case of new workers, or uncertainty or hesitancy arising from inexperience Many people feel hesitant when starting some new job where they might spoil material or cause trouble to more experienced workers Often these individuals are good, conscientious workers, and there may be little real danger of their causing the trouble they fear A few encouraging words may carry them into the work to a point where they forget themselves and go ahead easily There are always new employees, also, who do not know what to expect from management and so stand waiting An inter

Once he is oriented, the learner must also be motivated. It is his activity, not the interviewer's, that is essential to the learning process, so he must feel the desirability of being active. The usual principles of motivation apply here, but the goal toward which the learning is directed deserves emphasis.

With the prospective learner in a state of readiness, the interviewer will want to consider the material he is presenting. Learning can be thought of as the connecting of ideas and thoughts that previously were disconnected. Some reason should appear for this new association of elements. The learner must find some kind of satisfaction in getting two and two fitted together. A variety of words have been used to express this idea. The component parts must seem to "belong" together. The learner must get some insight into a developing pattern. The integrated material must have meaning.

A means toward insuring that the material presented will have meaning and that the interviewee will use it with insight is to examine it by means of the "whole–part" concept. Nearly everything can be analyzed and the separate parts examined. This practice is frequently followed in teaching because the separate parts are simpler than the whole. But, when all are understood, the separate parts must be put together to form the whole unit and this unit related to the total program in which it fits. A watch, for instance, can be taken apart and examined, but it is not fully understood until it is back in working order and its uses determined in relation to other means of keeping time.

Remembering that the learner must be active with the new material to make it a part of his own equipment, the interviewer will attempt to see that some early use is made of the new material. This should be easy in business interview teaching, where the immediate need for the new knowledge has usually brought about the interview. Still, if possible, the interviewer should follow up and see that the new learning is correctly used. There will nearly always be memory losses, and these should be expected. It is probable that much will

had been in years before He had learned to need a particular kind of safety. Such needs have to be understood by the interviewer who would motivate people on the basis of their individually learned tendencies.

Persuasion.—When we come to the matter of persuasion, we add to the factor of motivation that of convincing the interviewee. In all of us, needs and wants and thoughts become mixed together. Sometimes they become mixed up or confused. In such cases the interviewer must remember that just as it is the interviewee who must be motivated, it is also he who must think clearly and "get everything straightened out." The usual weakness here is for the interviewer to lose patience when his own thinking, which he believes to be clear and conclusive, is not accepted by the interviewee.

The interviewer's task in these situations is to think clearly himself and then present selected ideas and suggestions. He will also want to keep reminding the interviewee of his need to solve the problem. In this way he can persuade. Too much pressure is not the answer, however, for

> . . . one convinced against his will
> Remains of the same opinion still

Teaching As an Objective.—When the objective of the interview is to teach, it is helpful to remember that the interviewee must learn. Just telling him may seem to be teaching, but it could actually interfere with his learning. By dividing a teaching interview into the factors of (1) the learner, (2) the conditions of learning, and (3) the choice of techniques by the interviewer, we shall be better able to understand it.

The first need of the interviewee or learner is that he be oriented Related to learning, orientation means that the learner has a general understanding of the situation that confronts him and his part in the program. He knows why he is learning and what he will be able to do when the learning is completed. Even rats will not learn a maze until some exploratory behavior has been permitted. Nor will a human being who is "lost" settle down to learn anything.

Skills are usually higher units, or combinations of habits, or smaller learned units. When we read, we combine letters into words, words into phrases, and these into sentences. It frequently happens that a rapid reader cannot spell some of the words he has read correctly, and occasionally is not aware of having read certain words in a paragraph from which he has abstracted the intended meaning. As a skilled person, he deals with higher units, whereas the beginner must create those units out of smaller parts—in this case, letters, words, short phrases.

Learning also appears sometimes as a redefinition of familiar ideas. A young man who detested his foreman had a chance to meet him in another relationship on the company baseball team. The young man redefined the foreman, and they became good friends.

Conditioning should not, perhaps, be given as a different form of learning, since conditioning appears in all types. But from the point of view of techniques, it helps to treat conditioning separately. To condition someone, it is necessary to pay attention to time relationships and the previous learning, or native responses, of the individual. The person who starts to think of food when the clock strikes twelve is conditioned. He became that way from hearing the clock strike twelve on many occasions just before he was ready to go and eat. When some kind of regular signal or stimulus is put in a person's environment just prior to a well-learned or inherited response, he will become conditioned to it. That is, he will learn to make the familiar response whenever the signal occurs.

Advantage of Interview Teaching.—The advantage of interview teaching, as contrasted to other kinds, is that the interview situation allows give-and-take. The interviewer can make sure his explanations are understood as he goes along. He can observe the interviewee to make sure he is not learning mistakes. A simple formula for interview teaching is: "Tell him, show him, let him do it, observe and correct his work." This formula is good provided one remembers the considerations stated above.

be forgotten, particularly when teaching interviews are held in the middle of a busy day, for memory absorbs most when learning is followed by rest and quiet. The curve of forgetting indicates that much of the loss will take place almost immediately after the interview. Consequently, the interviewer must not be dismayed to find that his well organized interview lesson seems to have been forgotten very soon. A second presentation should fare better. There is no such thing as a good teacher without patience.

Some Techniques for Teaching.—We come now to some choices of technique by the interviewer. There are said to be four kinds of learning,[17] and, for purposes of suggesting techniques, we may add a fifth. They are:

1. Learning by differentiation.
2. Learning by undifferentiated wholes.
3. Learning by combination into higher units.
4. Learning by redefinition.
5. Learning by conditioning.

Learning by differentiation means that some subject is divided, and each part is again divided, and the resulting parts divided again so long as the process is useful. Suppose we divide "thinking" into defining, classifying, and making inferences. Then we divide defining into "aspects in which a thing resembles many others" and "aspects which individualize it." Then we divide the latter into sense data and peculiarities of form. The differentiated parts should become clearer and more distinct as we go along.

Studies of learning indicate that some things are best learned as totalities and that subdividing them is misleading. There are situations where the pattern of the whole situation is the dominant factor. A wheel is most meaningful as a wheel, and, in some situations, to examine the spokes, rim, and hub separately would detract from the purpose.

[17] Edmund S Conklin and F. S Freeman, Introductory Psychology for Students of Education (New York: Henry Holt & Co , 1946), p 245.

should be invited to give his side of the case. The reasonable aspects of the situation should be clear.

When the situation is clear, people are not so averse to being warned or "bawled out" as one might think. Experiments with school children indicate that they do better work and co-operate better when scolded than when disregarded. A state of mild unpleasantness, developed through discipline, has been found to speed up learning, although extreme unpleasantness retards it.

Workers who know they are breaking the rules may lose confidence in the company and feel that it is slack in other ways if their own misdoings are not called to their attention. A person's system of motivation is complex, however, so it is better to keep the reproof as simple and straightforward as possible. Discipline should be administered in private and should be impersonal. It should not be too severe, and it should be clearly related to the misdemeanor.

Adjusting Emotional Problems.—Adjusting emotional problems is the usual task of the psychiatrist and the clinical psychologist. The employee can often be referred to one of these workers more profitably than he can be treated within the firm. But there is a relativity to nearly everything. There are simple emotional problems as well as more complex ones. Counseling interviewers have frequently demonstrated their ability to help many employees with their emotionally colored problems.

Let us examine the solution of emotional problems as it is related to the interviewer, the company, and the type of problem. The first attribute of an interviewer who would solve emotional problems is the ability to listen patiently and intelligently. Sometimes people solve their own problems by simply talking them out and getting rid of their suppressed emotions.

The second vital requirement of this interviewer is a willingness to help the worker solve his problem in his own way. The "let me tell you how" attitude does not work very well even for experts where emotional problems are concerned.

The Directing Interview.—In giving directions, it is necessary to observe the person receiving them to make sure that they are understood. If the recipient has a quick and alert mind and is experienced, he may understand the directions almost before they are fully expressed. If he is slow or a new worker, explanations must be more complete. Directions seldom fall on a blank slate. The receiver nearly always has ideas of his own, and he is likely to mix the directions with his own concepts of what is to be done.

Some directions are so simple that all we need say about them is that they be given with elementary courtesy. When directions begin to be complex, the first requirement is that the person giving them examine them carefully and know that they can be carried out. Technical directions require something more. Even though they be clear, they may be too much for the memory span, which for the average individual is not more than five separate items. Good organization helps out here, for ideas meaningfully arranged will hold each other together. Still, it may be necessary to put long and technical directions in writing. Here the interview will be limited to making sure everything is understood and agreed upon.

In all of these situations, a basic requirement is the possession and use of a good vocabulary. It has long been recognized that a varied and full vocabulary is one of the necessary ingredients of supervisory success. Directions are not well given unless they are clear and to the point.

Disciplining.—Discipline is not an end toward which anyone strives; it is a means to an end. The objective in all discipline is to produce a better worker. To accomplish this, the worker himself must know the objective he is supposed to reach and exactly how his actions have interfered with the attainment of this objective.

It will be noted that here we have a type of persuasion, with its two elements—clear thinking and motivation. Some effort should be made to determine whether all the thinking has been done by the disciplinary agent. If this is so, the ensuing motivation will do no good. The person being disciplined

report to management any information on working conditions, employee attitudes, and supervision, they should not be expected to divulge anything heard in confidence about any particular employee.

The emotional problems that may appear are endless in variety. For example, a workman is unduly sensitive and has been made the butt of jokes. Another employee is distressed lest someone learn of a hidden incident in his past, such as a jail sentence. Another is worried because he is unable to meet his financial obligations due to sickness at home or some other cause of increased expenditures. Another has made some suggestion to the company that has been ignored or rejected, and so feels hurt by the apparent neglect. Another is isolated and without friends, but does not know what to do about it.

All such emotional problems cause tensions and the expenditure of poorly directed energy. They are fatiguing and prevent the individual from giving himself to his work. In helping solve such problems, the interviewer helps to increase the company's output, reduce costs, and pay his way in a competitive business world.

This does not mean that the interviewer stands by and does nothing. He re-expresses the employee's problem for him and attempts to clarify and objectify it. He suggests comparisons and analogies. He presents facts for consideration, but he never attempts to force his point of view.

The third requirement is that the interviewer be able to show friendliness without, himself, becoming involved in the problems he meets. The interviewer must remain an objective reference point; never shocked, surprised, or horrified; never, in fact, a partisan of any kind. This is necessary both for his treatment of the interviewee and for his own peace of mind.

The fourth requirement of the interviewer is knowledge for he will be called upon for all kinds of information. He certainly must know the company and the community as well. He must know the interviewee as a center point around which are directed many influences. He will want to learn all the psychology he can, with special reference to frustrations, suppressions, defense mechanisms, and the requirements of normal adjustment. He is not going to force this knowledge upon the interviewee, but he will use it to enable him to make suggestions and to place the interviewee's own statement in perspective.

Finally, the interviewer who attempts to solve emotional problems will need the skill that comes with practice. It is not an easy field of work.

The company that provides good adjustment interviewing does not always demand immediate and obvious results of its interviewers. Neither must it ask the interviewers to limit their interviews to a certain number of minutes or to give but one or two interviews per man. This type of interviewing must be judged on the basis of results after a year or two. Sometimes it may be necessary to give ten or more interviews to one person, and it may be worth it since the improvement of one individual working in a group of employees may influence fifty others.

There should be co-operation between interviewers and supervisors, and, though the interviewers may be expected to

1. Interest and curiosity in people rather than interest and curiosity about things.
2. An understanding and sympathy that is not "soft"; an ability to show sympathetic understanding, yet remain intelligent and alert to the realities of the situation.
3. Some personal experience with hardship. To have "been around" and seen life in a few of its less pleasant aspects is thought desirable.
4. Adaptability to social situations.

Some of these requirements and characteristics are self-explanatory. Others warrant some further discussion or qualification.

A sense of humor is thought to be a desirable characteristic of the interviewer by many writers, but it is not often considered an essential requirement. The great value of humor lies in its power to ease awkward and embarrassing situations with those who are, in a sense, strangers, to reduce tensions, and to build a feeling of fellowship between interviewer and interviewee. Since, however, good humor depends on emotional mood and cannot be turned on and off at will (as can courtesy and consideration), it is questionable whether it should be considered a requirement. Attempts at humor that fail can certainly do more harm than a lack of humor. Consequently, it is better to consider a good sense of humor as an advantage rather than as a necessity.

A pleasing personality is another requirement that must be described more fully. One who has this characteristic can often be described as "a person who is easy to talk to," or, again, as "a person who is easy to look at but who has no particular characteristics that make you want to look again." In other words, a "striking personality" is not particularly desirable in an interviewer. The interviewee should not be distracted from the business at hand by a furtive desire to study or admire the interviewer.

The requirements of sympathy and experience with life may also be differently described. Himler [2] suggests "emo-

---

[2] Leonard E. Himler, "Basic Principles and Techniques of Interviewing and Counselling," *Industrial Medicine*, XVI (1947), 529–34.

Chapter 8

THE TRAINING OF INTERVIEWERS

It has been said that the only way to train an interviewer is to put him to work interviewing. The statement has some truth, for certainly no one can develop skill at interviewing without practice. Without instructions and coaching, however, it will take the beginner a long time to make whatever improvement he is capable of. Without proper selection in the first place, the interviewer may be entirely unsuited to the work and never make any improvement. The training of interviewers, like the training of other skilled workers, is a process that can be improved by a study of its main elements. The central factors in interviewing are: (1) selection, (2) orientation, (3) demonstration, (4) practice, and (5) criticism or coaching.

Selecting Interviewers

No controlled validation studies have ever been made to determine the best personality characteristics for interviewing. This is a task for some future time when personality measurements have become more dependable. We do not know for certain whether a person with extrovert or introvert, dominant or submissive tendencies is better in the interviewer's chair. We do, however, have expert opinion concerning some of the personality qualities a good interviewer should possess.

Wonderlic,[1] who reports that he has trained several thousand men and women interviewers, suggests four general qualifications: good conversational ability, good mental ability, a keen sense of humor, and a pleasing appearance. In addition, he requires four specific characteristics:

[1] E. F. Wonderlic, "Improving Interview Techniques," *Personnel*, XVIII, No. 4 (1942), 232–38.

interviews involves more than an understanding of the name. It requires understanding the purposes of the various interviews and the conditions under which those purposes can be best achieved.

Methods of Orientation.—Uhrbrock[3] has recommended that the beginning interviewer be broken in by having him conduct different kinds of interviews. First, advises Uhrbrock, he should be assigned to exit interviewing; next to surveys of employee attitudes by means of conversational interviews; then to employment interviewing. This order places employment interviewing in the most important position and utilizes the others as a preparation. By interviewing those who are leaving their work, the learning interviewer finds out some of the reasons for failure and dissatisfaction. In attitude surveys he will discover the importance of attitudes and the difference between good and bad ones. He will then know some particular attitudes that should be watched for in prospective employees.

Probably the most common method of orienting the new interviewer is by lecture and discussion. Whenever several new interviewers are being trained at the same time, they can be helped a good deal at the beginning by simple lectures covering such topics as: "How long should an interview take?" "What should be done if the interviewee does not seem able to express himself?" "What should be done if the interviewee talks off the subject and doesn't seem inclined to stop?" A good deal that is said in these lectures will have to be said over again in individual coaching and criticism, but the lecture does help by orienting the beginner and speeding up the learning process. The same can be said for reading about the interview. Such reading will never take the place of practice and coaching, but it does prepare the beginner to recognize situations and to catch on more rapidly when he encounters the situation in an actual interview.

[3] Richard Stephen Uhrbrock, "The Personnel Interview," *Personnel Psychology*, I (1948), 273–302.

tional maturity" as an indication of "having been around," and says in regard to being sympathetic, that the interviewer should be able to build up an understanding and co-operative relationship without himself becoming involved in the problem. Becoming involved in the interviewee's problems is an easy mistake to make. It is very difficult to listen to a person describe his troubles without sympathizing, and it is an art to sympathize "objectively." The interviewer can learn to listen to troubles and to re-express the emotions they imply in his own words. This technique, it has been found, often helps the interviewee; he has expressed himself, has been listened to, and understood. But the interviewer must retain sufficient detachment to avoid offering a job to a person who should not have it and to prevent any disturbance of his sleep at night or impairment of his health because of worry.

"A well-adjusted, mentally healthy person with a variety of interests" is a good description of what an interviewer's personality should be. This implies the quality of flexibility —that ability which enables a person to make contact with people from all walks of life who have had a wide variety of experiences.

Orienting the Interviewer.—Orientation, according to the dictionary, is "any process of determining a bearing." The interviewer should get his own bearings before he attempts to guide others. Is he interviewing to increase his own knowledge of personnel problems in order to become a supervisor and work up the executive ladder? Is he interviewing because he likes dealing with people and has chosen this as his preferred field? Is he interviewing because he is a foreman and his other work depends upon efficient interviewing? What is the relationship of interviewing to his own interests and his own career? He will do better work if he has thought through these problems.

Next, he must get his bearings with respect to the interview procedures. What kinds of interviews will he conduct; employment interviews, adjustment or counseling interviews, or exit interviews? Developing a direction for each of these

expected to exercise over the interview should be explained in the beginning so that he can observe this factor in the demonstrations.

After the beginner has been oriented by means of reading, lectures, discussion, and participation in short interviews involving the beginning, middle, and end organization, the training can proceed with demonstrations, practice, and individual criticism or coaching. These techniques can be interchanged as the occasion demands.

Interview Demonstrations

Interviews have been demonstrated for learners in quite a variety of ways. The most important of these are: (1) observation of real interviews through a one-way screen; (2) recordings of interviews by means of phonograph or wire or tape recorder; (3) a dramatization with a prepared script; (4) an interview conducted by the instructor with a volunteer from the class; (5) motion pictures of interviews. Let us consider each of these.

Observation of Interviews Through a One-Way Screen.— The observation of actual interviews through a one-way screen has a number of advantages. The beginners feel that they are seeing a bit of real life. Decisions affecting someone's career are actually being made, and the activity they are witnessing is no imitation, but the real thing. Such an atmosphere of actuality is almost sure to influence the attitudes of the watchers, arouse their interest, and call forth their closest attention.

It is necessary that the watchers be separated from the interview. Unless this is done, an audience of beginners is likely to ruin the interview. If something amusing happens they laugh. And once an audience has laughed at or commented on something taking place in an interview, the nature of the interview has changed. Some self-conscious interviewers and interviewees cannot help but bid for attention or approval of the class, and this can disturb the interview still more.

If the one-way screen together with certain other arrange-

Discussion of interview problems can orient the beginner in the same way as a lecture or reading, and sometimes do it better. One discussion procedure is to present a number of interview situations, one by one, and have them discussed. Negative situations, such as the following, are perhaps the easiest around which to organize a discussion:

How would you detect and what would you do if you found:

Lack of skill in an applicant?
Lack of education?
Lack of experience?
Lack of aptitude and intelligence?
A troublemaker?
An unco-operative individual—a lone wolf?
A maladjusted person?
Emotional immaturity?

Discussions of such subjects often arouse beginners by showing them the difficulty of detecting characteristics they may not have given much thought to, and also by indicating that some problems have more than one solution.

A very good orientation device is to have the beginners carry on a series of very simple interviews with their classmates. In these interviews, some simple problem is given and the organization of the beginning, middle, and end of the interview are stressed. No further refinement is undertaken. This technique acquaints the learner with the main elements of every interview in its most general form, soft-pedaling the particular, individual interview problems which will be encountered after more training.

If a patterned or organized interview is being used by the firm, some discussion of the pattern or method of organization should be given in the orientation period. Organizing is one way an individual can get his bearings and determine where he is going during the interview. In cases where the nondirective technique is being emphasized, that should be discussed and attempted very early in the training. In all cases, the amount of direction and control that the interviewer is

the practicality of presenting the solution to some interview problem by an experienced interviewer after a class discussion. For instance, the discussion may have centered about interview organization, or the asking of embarrassing questions, or the quieting of an angry complainant. When the class has presented its solution, the solution of the experienced interviewer, recorded in an actual interview, is then presented to the class.

In order to obtain the greatest advantage from sound recordings of interviews, a library of such recorded interviews should be built up. For this purpose it seems best to record as many interviews as possible and then classify them afterwards according to the factor or factors they best demonstrate. With tape recordings it is possible to cut out parts of interviews and retain only the parts wanted for demonstration.

A significant advantage of the tape-recorded interview is the fact that it can be transcribed, that is, reproduced in print exactly as it was given, and made available for study by the trainee. The trainee then is able to analyze the interview in terms of certain principles which the company wants emphasized. The recorded interview, for instance, might be analyzed according to the basic principles of interviewing, by posing the four following questions:

1. Did the interviewer establish friendly contact and treat the interviewee "as a person"?
2. Did the interviewer adequately orient the interviewee?
3. Did the interviewer maintain skilful communications?
4. Did the interviewer get enough information of the right kind to enable him to make a just decision?

Because of their flexibility, availability on demand, and transferability to written script, and because, also, they give emphasis to the sound factors of the interview without visual interference, sound recordings represent an excellent means of demonstrating many factors from the actual interview. Note, in the following excerpt from a transcript of a tape-recorded interview, the repetition of some of the words and phrases and the inexactness of the grammar. Such details, lend the

ments is used, the interviewee will believe he is having a regular, "run-of-the-mill" interview and will act as he normally would in any other interview. To this extent, the interview is a small segment of real life. The interviewer, however, is rather certain to know that the audience is sitting behind the screen. Although he is experienced and will not be too much influenced by its presence, he will still, to some extent, be on his good behavior.

A screen has the disadvantages, however, of interfering with the sound of the voices. If the interviewee speaks in a very low voice, the audience may not be able to hear what he says. If the interviewer says, "speak louder, please; I'm a little deaf," the naturalness of the interview is somewhat impaired and, indeed, the admonition may not even be effective. If a loud speaker is installed for the audience, great care must be taken to prevent the interviewee from seeing the apparatus or hearing his projected voice. Otherwise, he may become aware that "something is going on" and become even more self-conscious than if he knew he was before an audience.

Taken all together, the one-way screen may be considered a very good way to demonstrate the interview, provided the proper facilities are available.

Sound Recordings of Interviews.—Sound recordings by means of phonograph or wire or tape recorders capture, not the whole interview, but only the oral part of it, and so become primarily a means of emphasis. As the visual personalities are eliminated, such factors as voice, enunciation, rapidity of speaking, courtesy, picking up cues dropped by the interviewee, awkward pauses, and general organization of the interview are all highlighted.

Sound recordings made in some actual business situation give the same impression of reality as the interview observation behind the one-way screen. These recordings have, in addition, the special advantage of being available for demonstration on demand and can be a valuable method of classroom illustration of such factors as good and bad voices. Another advantage of the demonstration-on-demand factor is

conceivable subject that could fall under personnel management.

INTERVIEWER: Did you have much clerical work to take care of in this job?

INTERVIEWEE: Oh yes I did. I was snowed under with paper work, and I had a lot of red tape to cut. As chief clerk, as far as clerical work was concerned, one of my duties was to receive every piece of correspondence that came into the personnel division, and at times we had twelve hundred pieces come in one day. I was supposed to look the correspondence over and lot it out to the different divisions of the personnel headquarters, and some of the routine correspondence I would keep myself and take the action on and send it to an officer for signature. I was primarily responsible that the correspondence flowed smoothly and uninterruptedly through the personnel division and was channeled out to the various branches and sub-divisions.

INTERVIEWER: Did you ever have to reprimand any of the men under you or chastise them in any way?

INTERVIEWEE: Yes, I have when it has been necessary on occasions but not very often. I found that I could get more out of the men who worked under me by setting a good example for them. A lot of times when reprimands might have been necessary, I found out that by talking with them I accomplished much more. It really depends upon the individual. There are men that simply can't be reprimanded; by that I mean if you give them a good reprimand it would break their spirits. On the other hand you find other men that have to be reprimanded. That is the only way you can handle them.

Dramatization with a Prepared Script.—This method has the advantage of emphasis. Almost any factor in the interview may be overdrawn and made to stand out clearly through a dramatization. Most groups tire after seeing a succession of correct interviews demonstrated by some experienced person. Perfection and near-perfection, without variation, get to seem a bit commonplace, and the attention of the observers may lag. It is usually easy to get volunteers from a class to drama-

tone of authenticity to this type of material and enhance its value for study purposes.

INTERVIEWEE: Good morning Mr. Brown.

INTERVIEWER: Good morning, won't you have a seat please?

INTERVIEWEE: Thank you.

INTERVIEWER: We sort of needed this rainy weather we had today, didn't we?

INTERVIEWEE: Yes we did, we could use this rain for the water shortage.

INTERVIEWER: We sure can. In your application blank, I have been looking it over, and the last job you had here was four years in the United States Air Force. Would you please tell me a little about that?

INTERVIEWEE: Well, most of the time I was in the Air Force I spent in the grade of Master Sergeant doing personnel work. About two years ago I finally decided that my possibilities for advancement would be greater on the outside than remaining in. So when my enlistment expired, I left the service to get training in management and personnel work.

INTERVIEWER: Just how many men did you have under you in the Air Force?

INTERVIEWEE: Well, it varied from time to time. I have had as many as two hundred men under me and at other times I would have only two or three clerks. At the time I left I was working in Command Defense Headquarters, and I had about two hundred men under me. I was not the supreme commander of the two hundred men, but I was responsible for their supervision, their immediate supervisor.

INTERVIEWER: Just what kind of personnel work did you do?

INTERVIEWEE: I was chief clerk of the personnel division. We had air bases scattered throughout the United States. The headquarters was responsible for administering all of those bases and setting up the personnel policies, the training policies, all policies with regard to maintenance, supply and operational techniques, and training programs. I was concerned with the personnel setup, transfers, promotions, assignments, retirements, discharges, and classifications, in fact any and every

and wrist, almost out of line of vision. The interviewee looks down for a moment to see what the motion was and, as a result, seems distracted. In another situation the interviewer leans forward in his chair. This movement gives the impression that he is imparting a tidbit of rare gossip. Then he sits and leans forward, but not to the same extent, giving the appearance of eagerness. Now he appears nervous because of his forward, upright position. Next he sits back and appears indifferent. When he sits further back, he gives the impression of carelessness or lazy comfort.

Generalizations as definite as those described above are modified somewhat by the individual differences of the subjects. The motion pictures do give rather definite impressions of personality and mood. In the School of Commerce, Accounts, and Finance of New York University, where interviewing has been taught for more than a decade, a series of motion picture studies was made of interviewers. These pictures were then examined by a number of observers, and the impressions made by a variety of postures, movements, and circumstances were discussed. As a result of these studies, the following list of "don'ts" was prepared for the prospective interviewer.

Don't pull down girdle, dress, or vest.

Don't smooth the hair.

Don't button or unbutton vest.

Don't clasp and unclasp hands.

Don't swing back and forth in the chair.

Don't sway the shoulders.

Don't move around in chair.

Don't fumble in pockets.

Don't look at hands.

Don't tap or make other movements with the feet.

Don't toy with articles such as watch or ring nor with fingers or nose.

Don't continually nod "yes" or "no."

tize some special feature of the interview, as, for example, controlling the conversation. It may be arranged that the interviewee will attempt to "sell himself" by talking all the time about some of his experiences that have little or no relation to the job specifications. The interviewer will be expected to obtain the facts he needs without being too abrupt or violating the rule of courtesy. Such a performance, injected occasionally into a training program, can bring to the job of learning a touch of novelty that re-awakens interest. It also motivates the scrutiny of particular problems that an interviewer may meet in his later work.

Instructor-Volunteer Interview.—One of the simplest means of demonstration is to have the instructor call on one of the group and interview him before the class. Experience indicates that when a class has worked together for a time, the members become accustomed to each other, so an interview can be carried on before them almost as naturally as it could with a one-way screen to hide the audience. The instructor is able to demonstrate points of particular importance at the stage of training that the group is in. An added advantage of this type of interview is that it prepares the group for practice interviews where both participants will be from among the trainees.

Motion Pictures of Interviews.—Sound films of interviews are so expensive to make that they are impractical in most situations. But with sound records of the verbal aspects and silent movies of the visual aspects, almost the same results may be achieved at much less cost. The silent movies emphasize all such matters as the rate of movement, posture, seating arrangements, and the like.

In projecting a film, it may be stopped and run back in order to find out just what motions or postures may be responsible for a given impression. The hand is quicker than the eye, and the actual interviewer may receive a bad or good impression without knowing exactly why. When the interview is stopped and examined on the screen, the critical elements may be identified. Here is a gesture made by the hand

Varied and full movements that can be seen clearly by the interviewee without requiring him to look aside.

Movements that are properly timed. (Many a good joke has been spoiled by an expectant or encouraging laugh at the wrong moment.)

Rhythmical, as opposed, to explosive, sudden and jerky movements.

The observers of these camera-recorded interviews approved of a pleasant expression and clothing that was neat and tidy. These factors need emphasis rather than analysis. A person can do little for his face except keep it clean, have his teeth in good repair, and be natural. The desirability of naturalness indicates that chewing gum is not advisable and that holding gum in the mouth unchewed is worse. Beard stubble and other eradicable blemishes such as moles should be removed, and the hair kept well groomed.

As the interview proceeds, it should be addressed to its particular purpose. Since human attention is a fluctuating act, however, attention can very easily be diverted by a waving hand, a tapping foot, dirty fingernails, a facial grimace, or queer posture. When this happens, the thread of the thought is broken, and considerable effort may be needed to repair the situation.

The interviewer must be on his guard not only to avoid any movements of his own that might influence the interviewee, he must also be watchful lest his judgment of the interviewee be affected more than it should be by incidental factors in the latter's posture and activity. Many interviewers do not realize how closely the senses work together. But consider the fact that men smell their coffee and cigarettes rather than taste them. A restaurant with dirty forks or sloppy linen on the table or bad smells coming from the kitchen will fail to hold its discriminating customers, no matter how well the food is prepared. Sensations of touch, temperature, taste, and smell all combine to make what we call a good dinner. The same principle holds in an interview. As we listen to a man's

The following postures of the interviewer were found undesirable.

Holding the head to one side.

Placing feet in an awkward position, that is, one on top of the other or standing on one.

Hunching body forward or leaning too far back.

Placing feet too far apart.

Extending elbows out from the body in an awkward position.

Sitting on the edge of the chair or sitting sideways.

Leaning forward while standing.

Clasping hands behind back. (Any grasping or holding on that makes one maintain the same position too long produces an unfavorable impression.)

Facial movements and expressions were also studied in the motion pictures of the interview. The following should be avoided:

Looking up, down, or to the side—evading the glance of the interviewee.

Staring at the interviewee too intently.

Squinting at the interviewee or blinking.

Forcing a smile or laughing artificially. (Forced actions of both face and hands are likely to be poorly timed.)

Speaking out of the side of the mouth.

Looking around the room or at the work on one's desk while talking.

Certain movements were particularly approved. Observers of motion pictures of actual interviews listed the following to be desirable:

Movements that have meaning. Gestures that help convey the idea.

rections are made immediately when they are needed and prevents the learner from practicing mistakes. Consequently, further discussion of practice may well be combined with the discussion of coaching or criticism.

Coaching or Criticism.—The instructor will want to make sure that all the principles presented by lecture, discussion, or demonstration are adhered to. Consequently, he will want to listen to the practice interviews and comment on them as soon as they are finished. Occasionally there may even be reason to stop an interview in its course to correct some very poor procedure. Some of the methods which have been used to coach or criticize learning interviewers are as follows: (1) require the interviewer to write out a verbatim report of the interview when it is over ("I said," "he said," and so on); (2) stop-watch the interview, and point out how the time was spent; (3) record the interview with motion picture camera or sound recorder, and allow the principals to study their own performances; (4) have the interviews criticized by the whole group of trainees who have been watching and listening.

Verbatim Reports of Interviews by the Interviewer.—A written report places all statements down in black and white so they can be carefully examined. According to Covner,[5] who compared sound recordings with written interviews, only about one-third of all the statements made are actually written down, but a very large part of the recorded material is accurate. In another study, Symonds and Dietrich[6] examined the relative memory losses. They found that details of date and place are the first items to be forgotten, and that the more meaningful the material was to the interviewer, the longer he remembered it. Some relationships come out in even sharper contrast after a period of time has elapsed, and delayed statements about the interview occasionally show more insight into

ideas, we are influenced by the pleasantness of his voice, the clearness and rate of his speech, the movements he makes, and the postures he adopts, as well as by his clothing, his complexion, and the feel of his handshake. Among these, one of the most important (because it is so obvious and continually present) is clothing. Many men could buy the appearance of more intelligence by wearing better—or better kept—clothing.

In training interviewers, it is important to stress both the influence their appearance, movements, and gestures will have in the success of their interviews, and the necessity of being on the alert to avoid bias in their judgment of applicants because of such factors.

Practice Interviewing

The beginning interviewer, having selected the work or having been selected for it, having been oriented, and having been prepared by watching demonstrations, is finally ready to practice. This is usually arranged by having the different members of a training group interview each other. It should not be assumed, however, that practice by itself will bring about the improvement sought. Wonderlic,[4] in teaching his patterned interview, found it desirable to arrange demonstrations repeatedly so that the learner had the pattern continually before him. He also advised that learners memorize all the questions or, at the least, their position on the page of the Interviewer's Guide. This practice enables the interviewer, when asking the precise questions the Guide calls for, to speak the questions with ease or read them without hesitation. Wonderlic also believes that the learner should practice the parts of both the interviewer and interviewee so that he can become familiar with the emotional tensions that go along with being in both these situations.

Practice is always best when it is under the observation of a coach or instructor. This insures that criticisms and cor-

[4] Loc. cit.

interview performance without rapt attention. Usually such convincing criticisms have sufficient force to stimulate the learner to correct the defect.

Class and Instructor Criticism.—Criticism by the class and instructor immediately after the interview is the most simple and direct of the various methods of criticism, and so is perhaps the most useful of all. When studying together, people are not very sensitive to each other's criticisms. Furthermore, they are likely to bring out and question points and topics related to their reading or discussions, and, so, frequently bring to mind items that would possibly be overlooked by the instructor.

Another advantage of general class criticism is that it can be tied in with class discussion of solutions to interview problems. If the class finds something wrong with an interview, they can go on to a discussion of how to right it. The instructor in many of these class discussions need be nothing more than a silent witness. He will want to make sure that the criticisms are sound and that the remedy proposed would be reasonable and effective, and so exercise something of the function of a guide.

When reasonably good candidates have been selected and trained with such devices as have been discussed in this chapter, they can learn to be good interviewers. The instructor should always keep in mind, however, that good learning requires good motivation. The learners can often be reminded of the high importance of the work they will do, and that they will be dealing with people's lives. The decisions they make after a twenty- or thirty-minute interview may well influence the whole life of someone else. Interviewing should be shown to be one of the most interesting of occupations. The interviewer is permitted to get an inside view of another person's mind, to read his hopes and fears, to report to him his victories, and to forewarn him of his failures. With these ideas in mind, the interviewer will want to do his work well.

the situation than those made immediately after the interview has ended.

Despite memory losses, however, the written report of everything said in the interview may be helpful in training. The interviewer can point to the exact reason for his decision, and clarify the difference between fact and implication. Even if the interviewer attempts to improve his interview as he writes it out afterwards, he cannot improve concepts or situations that he has not fully grasped. The material can be carefully discussed by the coach and interviewer, then put away to be re-read by the interviewer a month or so later.

Timing an Interview.—In stop-watching an interview it is best to have about four or five observers each timing different phases. One person, for instance, records the amount of time that the interviewer uses up in talking. Another times the amount of talking done by the interviewee. Yet another times the pauses of the interviewer—the length of time it takes him to get under way after the interviewee has answered a question and stopped talking. Still another person times the delays of the interviewee, the length of time he hesitates before answering a question. Another person may take the over-all time of the interview so that ratios may be worked out. Such a procedure as this will make the interviewer clearly aware of the fact if he is talking too much, not allowing adequate pauses, or in other ways not creating a proper balance in the interview. Since the timekeepers need not sit close to the interviewing desk, a timed interview can go on much as though nothing unusual were happening.

Sound Records and Motion Pictures of Interviews.—Sound records and moving pictures seem to have an invariable appeal to their performers; consequently, these methods of examining an interview are well motivated. It is common to see the principals become embarrassed at watching their pictures and say, "I didn't know I did that." Similarly, an abrupt or discourteous speech may have an unexpected loudness when spoken back by the sound recorder. Never, in the experience of the authors, has anyone watched or listened to his own

One of Schopenhauer's favorite statements held that going to the theater was like holding up a mirror to one's own life. Yet the theater cannot be compared with interviewing for holding up a mirror to life. It is impossible to make a good interview adjustment to another person without observing him closely. Doing this day after day, the interviewer really learns about people, the source of more than half the problems of business.

Inevitably, the interviewer meets the person who uses tricks and flattery. Usually these devices are very obvious, even though the person applying them feels that he is being clever. Discovering how easily trickery can be detected and how shoddy it appears when compared with honesty and ability, the interviewer is somewhat less likely to use such devices himself. Learning from actual samples how insipid flattery sounds on the receiving end, the interviewer discovers the value of genuine character. If the interviewer is intelligent, he will develop standards of sincerity, honesty, and straight-forwardness in conduct as a by-product of his daily work.

He will learn also, if he interviews over a long period of time, that many common ideas about human nature are false and misleading. Not all beauties are "dumb," nor are all young girls sweet and gentle. Not all men who swagger are bold, nor are all mild-mannered people easy to "push around." Everyone who looks him in the eye is not necessarily honest. People who wear shoddy clothes are not always poor. Nor are people who talk as though they aimed to conquer the world always hard working and energetic. To a good inter-viewer, people are individuals to be analyzed, compared, and understood. After a time, this work gives him real insight into the peculiarities of human nature.

If the interviewer does not start out as a good conversation-alist, his work will train him to become one. In his job as a purposeful conversationalist, he will be paired with individuals who may make all the conversational blunders and he must still talk with these people in a way that will give him the informa-tion he needs. The people who sit without uttering a word he must interest and release from their speech limitations.

Chapter 9

BY-PRODUCTS OF THE INTERVIEW

Direct results will obviously follow an interview; otherwise it would not have been held. Employment interviews will directly provide employees. Transfer interviews will transfer workmen to other jobs. Adjustment interviews will reduce emotional tensions and leave workmen free to apply all their energies to their tasks. These and other direct objectives will be accomplished by interviews to the extent that the interviewing is effective, and it is the primary purpose of this book to make all such interviews more effective. At this point, however, let us consider the indirect results.

It has been said that a man's every action is like throwing a stone in a pond, that it sets up a chain of effects that spreads out in diminishing degrees to the very periphery. Interviewing is a particularly good illustration of this idea. The by-products of interviews are such advantages as a better understanding of human nature by the interviewer and a better morale among the employees. Although these advantages come, to some extent, without additional effort, awareness and study of such indirect advantages will help increase them.

In order to describe these by-products clearly, it will be well to classify them. Broadly they will fall into three groups: (1) benefits to the interviewer, (2) benefits to the interviewee, and (3) benefits to the firm.

Benefits to the Interviewer

The interviewer probably gains the most. Interviewing develops him as an individual and makes him a more interesting person. It also gives him some direct preparation for advancement to supervisory and executive work.

comes from merely doing his day's work conscientiously. If, however, he is interested in advancing himself and is alert to every opportunity for learning, he can materially increase the self-development dividends of his job. If, for instance, he reads some of the scientific journals and business magazines dealing with his work in order to broaden his point of view, the interviews he conducts will increase in interest and bring him many fresh ideas. Typical questions he might ask himself are: "Does the interviewee respond more accurately to narrative questions or to the cross-examination technique?" "Is the display of emotions in a seemingly ordinary situation an indication that something is being held back?" "Do sociable people have more highly developed characters than individuals who tend to stay by themselves?" "Is it possible to estimate honesty or perseverance in an interview?"

Experience in interviewing is both stimulating and rewarding. Almost anyone can well consider it an advantage to perform this work for awhile, for he will benefit personally, and, consequently, find life more interesting.

Promotion Opportunities.—Another indirect result of interviewing becomes almost a direct result for the interviewer. The alert interviewer has an opportunity to learn a great deal about business in general and about his own firm in particular. All day long he asks questions and gives information that he has gathered in the course of his work. If he has high standards of accuracy and sufficient interest and curiosity to follow stray bits of knowledge until they dovetail into patterns, the interviewer will continually increase his store of information, and, consequently, prepare himself for promotion.

It is true that some interviewers do not look for advancement with its new tasks and added responsibilities. For these, continued interviewing will mean better interviewing and the greater satisfaction that comes with a better mastery of their work. But those who look forward to some form of supervisory or executive work will be receiving part of their training in their everyday work as interviewers. Such preparation for supervisory work is not only a logical development but ap-

There will be others who are absolutely determined to tell him some adventure of a fishing trip the previous summer, when it has absolutely no place in the interview. The interviewer has endless practice also in "breaking the ice," in putting the other person at ease, and in attentive listening. To maintain mutual sympathy and understanding, he must talk his way through awkward breaks in the conversation. These tasks are excellent training in the art of conversation, an activity in which he will find endless pleasure and advantage all through his life.

In many interviews it is necessary to find out something of the interviewee's background—the sort of a family he comes from, his home traditions, the number of members in the family, what they do, how they have gotten along. It is also necessary for the interviewer to know how the interviewee came to select his occupational interest and what he has done to further it. Perhaps the religion of the interviewee and any prejudices he may have experienced must be sought out.[1]

Is there a better, more interesting way than personal conversations by which to find out about community life, religious customs, family problems, educational procedures, and the relation of these to business life and progress? How many times has an interviewer learned something that could apply to his own life! Some interviewee mentions a new source of community entertainment or some unique way to solve a work problem, or, perhaps, a new tool that has become available. Sometimes, the mere contact with a courageous, optimistic personality will stimulate an interviewer and cheer him on his way. A person who is a missionary for some social ideal or an advocate for some strange ism will put him on his mettle and force him to think out his relationship with humanity and the social order. In time, if he thinks through the human experiences presented to him, he becomes a person of assured orientation and perspective.

To some extent, the interviewer's personal development

[1] In New York and some other states, questions of religion and race cannot legally be asked.

Interviews Are Appreciated.—Supervisors and executives work with people all the time and may forget how much alone some workers are. There are social jobs and isolated jobs in every business. Solitary confinement is nearly as difficult in business as it is in prison. For the person who works alone, receiving instructions and talking over a detail now and then may brighten the whole day, provided the exchange is friendly. And everyone, whether he works alone or not, blossoms out when given an opportunity to express himself about his work. All of us take our lives and thoughts seriously. The President of the United States could place no greater value on his life than we do on ours. But most of us need more encouragement for our self-respect than does the President, and so appreciate our opinions being solicited, particularly by authoritative people. It encourages us and stimulates us to work harder. All interviews with a worker about his work give him, as a by-product, the feeling that he is a person of some importance. If listened to with understanding, the new ideas he may wish to contribute or the questions he must have answered increase his own self-respect. This improved feeling about himself and his work which the interviewee gains motivates increased output and holds him longer as a loyal employee.

Complaint and exit interviews often have the side result of restoring the interviewee's injured pride or diminished self-confidence. A person can be hurt more by loss of a job than by loss of his wages. This blow to pride is often experienced by older people when they are replaced by someone younger and more energetic. A skilful interviewer, by his method of presenting such a situation, may leave the older person with his self-respect intact. This is an accomplishment of great value and one which, in turn, creates a by-product of good will for the firm.

There are many other situations where a person's self-respect may be injured but where an intelligently conducted interview will salve the hurt and accomplish whatever immediate ends are necessary. A required transfer is one example. If properly understood, it may be happily accepted. The disci-

proved by experience, as indicated in the following statement by Bingham: [2]

... from among the interviewers a superb crop of front line supervisors has been recruited—employees who, before having to shoulder their first supervisory responsibilities, learned more about the nature and range of differences in workers' desires and drives than some foremen ever do.

Benefits to the Interviewee

Getting the Right Job.—Many an applicant, needing an income, applies for the first job that he sees and thinks he can do. Sometimes such a person meets an experienced interviewer who knows job possibilities and can help him understand himself and his potentialities. In such cases, the applicant may not only get a job, but get one that fits him perfectly. He will then find more pleasure in his work than he expected or than he ever dreamed was possible.

There are cases, particularly involving younger people, where the interviewer can help bring about clearer self-knowledge even when he cannot give a job. More than once an applicant has gone away from a job interview disappointed, only to realize the next day that he had gained more than if he had been given the job he requested. A good interviewer —with his experience in analyzing human nature, his knowledge of job requirements, and his objective point of view—is able to help a great many people even among those he must send away.

The interview also provides other indirect benefits for the interviewee. In preparing for a placement interview he may learn to make a better presentation of his experience. In making complaints or discussing his work, he gets training toward clearer thinking. Through his interviews in the plant he makes contacts with management and leaves an impression which sometimes does much more good than the solution of his immediate problem.

[2] Walter V. Bingham, "Today and Yesterday," *Personnel Psychology*, II, No. 1 (1949), 139.

tunities for prospective executives; (2) knowledge obtained on working conditions, supervision, and employee attitudes; (3) the improvement of morale; and (4) the improvement of public relations.

Executive Training.—Every supervisor and foreman has much interviewing to do. Foremen usually devote the final employment interview to determining whether or not they want the new man on their "team." They also settle many complaints, sometimes announce promotions, and always give directions and discuss difficulties in the work. The need for skill in interviewing is recognized in many foremen training programs.

Once a man has become a supervisor there is seldom an opportunity to send him back for actual experience in interviewing, although this was done in the Western Electric Research Project.[4] When the interviewing program of this company was expanded, supervisors were assigned to the work for about a year. It was considered that, with training, they could do interviewing work and the interviewing in turn would add an important skill to their supervisory abilities. In addition, all the active supervisors discussed the written interview reports in their conference. This discussion created more interest in supervisory techniques, and the whole program is said to have improved with the introduction of the interviewing.

The many companies that select prospective executive material and school the men with actual work in one department after another would do well to give such men an assignment in actual interviewing. If we examine some of the analyses of management's responsibilities and of executive requirements, we find a sound basis for this use of the interview in supervisory training. Starch, Tead, and Glover[5] are

[4] George C. Homans, "The Western Electric Researches," in S. D. Hoslett (ed.), *Human Factors in Management* (Parkville, Mo.: Park College Press, 1946), pp. 164-66.

[5] Daniel Starch, *How to Develop Your Executive Ability* (New York: Harper & Bros., 1943), p. 211; Ordway Tead, *The Art of Leadership* (New York: Whittlesey House, 1935), p. 83; John G. Glover, *Business Operations Research and Reports* (New York: American Book Co., 1949), p. 7.

plinary interview is another which can, on occasion, be converted into a teaching situation.

The counseling interview is, of course, the prime occasion where the interviewee may receive endless indirect benefits. This interview has the direct objective of relieving emotional tensions, thereby permitting the worker to increase his output on the job and forge ahead in his work for the firm. Where it accomplishes this direct result, it is certain to brighten the worker's whole life. The relief from emotional tensions alone brings happiness. Better work increases job satisfaction and helps toward more pleasant associations with other workers. Better work also brings better wages, and these improve the worker's standard of living outside working hours.

Dickson[3] reported on the case of a man of forty-five who had worked for the same company since he was fifteen. His work record showed early progress and finally a regressive trend. Investigation revealed that the man was isolated on the job, left alone by other workers, and living a lonely life outside of working hours. His room was filled with medicines for imagined illnesses, and his only recreations were reading detective stories and drinking liquor. A series of interviews put this man "back on his feet." His work improved, his relations with other workers became more friendly, and he finally earned a promotion and increased wages. In another six years he was married, had established a nice home, and had risen to a position of responsibility. His difficulties apparently were completely overcome.

Benefits to the Company

The indirect benefits of interviewing to the company will depend, of course, on how much interviewing is done, how much time and opportunity are given to the interviewers, and how skilled the interviewers are. Assuming that the conditions are adequately met, the returns may be great. Some of the indirect advantages for the firm are: (1) training oppor-

there are individuals of good character and pleasing personality among every group of people and among all races and creeds. The training here is much better for the executive than that of social life, for although a broadminded sociable person might be ready to talk to all sorts of people, he might not have the ready opportunity. The interviewer, working on a business basis, may interview people from all walks of life. He may talk to the banker's daughter out for her first job as well as to the woman who cleaned the banker's house. If he has an aptitude for his work, he becomes friendly with people and learns from them. When he is advanced to supervisory or executive work, he brings a background of information that is not limited to his own social group. He has learned to like people, as an executive should, because they are human and are working along with him toward common ends.

Integrity. We have already discussed integrity as it relates to interviewing. In continually preferring the straightforward and honest person and rejecting the cheat, as he must do, the interviewer can hardly fail to see that others will do as he must do and that integrity and honest achievement are the best foundation for advancement in business.

Technical Mastery. Although every interview is a conversation, it is a conversation of special kind that deals with some technical aspect of business. A job may be discussed, for example, or a work procedure laid out. Some technical consideration is always involved and must be understood. The interviewer learns the technical side of business by preparing for these interviews. He must know the job requirements before he interviews people seeking jobs. He learns more technical facts in the give-and-take of the interview itself. It is more pleasant to learn from people than from books, and the alert interviewer can prepare for executive work by acquiring a great deal of technical information about the business from his interviews.

Furthermore, we should not overlook the fact that the employment interviewing question, "Tell me about your past experience," opens up a wide field of information about other

three authorities to whom we may turn for an analysis of management's requirements. When we select from the statements of these men the executive needs that are provided to some extent by interview training, our list reads as follows:

Starch: "Ability to deal with people."

Tead: "Friendliness and affection; integrity; technical mastery; teaching skill."

Glover (quoting the Federated American Engineering Societies of New York): Among the responsibilities of management are: (1) To establish sound business policies; (2) to develop an organization whose functions are logically assigned to competent individuals; (3) to build or secure plant and equipment and utilize them economically and effectively; (4) to maintain a suitable supply of labor and supervise and coordinate its efforts; (5) to organize and sustain proper relationships between owners and workers."

Let us briefly examine each of these requirements and investigate how interviewing helps a person to attain them.

Ability to Deal with People. Interviewing is not like packing a box of chocolates, where the only problem is to select inert pieces that can be fitted in. The interviewer deals with people who are driven by wants and urges. These people twist things around to make them seem favorable. They plead. The interviewer—pressed for time, sometimes "pressured" by people of influence, appealed to by numerous applicants, perhaps fatigued—must still proceed with his work in an orderly way and make fair decisions. When he reaches executive status, this training has made him fairly familiar with many problems in dealing with people.

Friendliness and Affection. Interviewing is a personal relationship in which one cannot be successful without a bit of friendliness. A hostile or suspicious attitude toward people in general would doom an interviewer to failure. A friendly interviewer, on the other hand, will "bring people out"; he will create an atmosphere in which people can talk and display traits of character which are admirable. If an interviewer does not learn to like everybody, he at least does learn that

machines are used by people; to achieve their greatest usefulness they must be designed with consideration for human requirements and preferences. The personnel interviewer intimately knows what these requirements are from his extensive contacts with employees. He gathers information of great value to an executive in getting the maximum return from plant and machinery.

Recruiting and Supervising Labor. When we consider the problem of maintaining a suitable supply of labor, we again find that the experience of employment interviewing can be extremely valuable. Frequently the interviewer asks, "How did you find out about this job?" In the process of his work he learns where the best employees come from and gets to know the procedures necessary to maintain an adequate flow of applicants. In this area of management, too, he is preparing for executive work.

Sustaining Proper Relationships Between Owners and Workers. The solution to half the problem of maintaining good relationships between owners and workers lies in understanding the workers. No one is in a better position to have this understanding than an individual who has done personnel interviewing, who has talked to people eager for jobs, who has listened to people leaving them, who has announced promotions and considered complaints.

Thus, from many points of view, personnel interviewing is an excellent preparatory experience for executive work. We are now in an era when the human element is considered much more carefully than it was in what has been called the "Machine Age." A wider comprehension of the values to be found in personnel interviewing would have a double advantage. It would provide many better interviewers by assigning more executive trainees to the task. It would also increase the care with which the interviewing is done.

Information on Working Conditions, Supervision, and Attitudes.—As business firms have grown larger there has been an inevitable distance created between management and the

workers. In the days when an employer knew all his helpers, there usually was harmony. Today, in shops where a manager personally knows all his employees, a general understanding can exist. But in the larger corporations many employees know little more about the company's first executive than they do about the President of the United States.

Many people will work for a concern even when they do not like it and would even be willing to sabotage it. There are influences which lead many a man to feel that his loyalties lie elsewhere than with his company. Obviously this is not a good state of affairs for the company. If there are internal stresses, these should be known so they can be corrected; secret police and Gestapo methods, however, are hardly the means recommended. Many large companies have spent much money on "attitude surveys" and other devices to provide management with information about "how things were going" in the ranks. The interview operates with double advantage in this work. It not only obtains information of what is going on, but often manages, at the same time, to change and improve the attitudes of those who have expressed themselves.

Every Interview Contributes Information.—Every type of interview contributes indirectly to information on working conditions, supervision, or the attitudes of the workers. In the employment interview, the interviewer is told what kind of people to employ. He knows the company's attitude. When he has the opportunity to talk to the various foremen who will direct the new people, he learns still more. He also learns a great deal about the conditions of work from the foremen and the job descriptions he has examined. Sometimes he will be able to talk to individual workers, particularly those he interviewed on employment, and will increase his knowledge of the conditions under which work is done, and the people who do it.

In follow-up interviews, part of the subject matter of the interview itself deals with this information we are seeking. "How are you getting along? How do you like the work? Do you find the shop a friendly place?" The answers to such ques-

tions are almost sure to provide information on lighting, ventilation, flow of work, attitudes of other workers, and how the new man is getting along with his boss. The immediate objective is to help the worker get adjusted, but the secondary yield of information is almost as valuable. A particular value in these follow-up interviews lies in the fact that the worker, being relatively new, can be objective in certain respects. The people he works with are not yet his "own group." He may see and report observations about the attitudes of the other workers that more established workers would not tell.

When transfers are requested by the worker, they are almost certain to bring information. "It's too drafty where I work." "I don't like the boss." "The other fellows are holding me back." Perhaps he would like to do some other kind of work where he thinks the opportunities would be greater. Whatever his explanation, it will be made in terms of the work and his ideas about the work. Added to information that comes from other sources this may accumulate into a valuable contribution.

In the complaint cases the interviewer has an exceptional opportunity to get information that at other times and in other ways might be very difficult to obtain. The complaining worker is usually aroused and ready to say what is on his mind. It frequently helps directly to solve the problem if he is allowed or encouraged to say it all. The interviewer should probe around the complaint, even if it can be satisfactorily adjusted at once. The complaint is only a center; it has a circumference and is connected with the methods of work and the personality of other workers. In the long run, the company benefits by knowing all the circumstances.

The exit interview again provides an unusual opportunity to learn more about the company. When a person leaves a group, he will often tell things about the group, and about conditions under which he worked, that he would not tell as a permanent member. In postexit interviews he will sometimes talk even more freely.

Counseling interviews, coming in a series as they often do, allow time for the interviewer to gain the confidence of the

interviewee. Because of this relationship the interviewer may learn a great deal about all the factors we have been discussing. The nature of the interview, however, requires that much of this information be reserved and not turned over to management. To report the data would violate the confidence under which they were obtained. But, even here, the information often can be used impersonally, without violating any confidential agreements and to the advantage of everyone. For instance, it might be a bad layout that makes a particular job harder than it should be, or a noisy machine that could be quieted with some device, or the need of some safety precaution.

By awareness of these interview opportunities for learning about the living conditions of the job, a company may save itself the expense of a specialized attitude survey. Or, more directly, it may acquire information about the jobs and the people doing them, and take action which will increase output and reduce costs.

Improving Morale.—When interviewing fulfills its purpose of making a friend for the company, it cannot help but leave by-products of improved morale. It remains for us here merely to examine the skeleton of morale and to find out in what way interviewing influences it.

Morale might be defined as the self-respect of a group. When individuals are conscious of membership in a group, and like it, that group has good morale. When workers tell with pride what company they work for and the job they do, that company is blessed with good morale. Like most advantages, that of high morale does not happen spontaneously. It comes about as the result of certain conditions. In our chain assembly age, these conditions must be fostered and built up. Morale is often lost in mechanization. It can be brought back, however, by attention to human values. Men do not like to be treated like machines. It is difficult for them to have a pride of craftsmanship when all they do is tighten three or four bolts as the assembly moves past them. There is little pride in labor or in the care of tools when labor is divided

down to a fraction, when a man's relationship to his machine is more important than his relationship to the other men on the job. If a man loses his individuality to a power-driven set of wheels and gears and if his social recognition disappears in a standardized product, he is likely to conclude, "Who cares?"

This "who cares" attitude is not a necessary part of modern production, but it is a frequent result. It almost inevitably develops unless some thought is given to the human aspects of the job. One of the most interesting and frequently quoted experiments indicating the power behind the human touch was carried out in the Hawthorne Plant of the Western Electric Company. Begun as a controlled observation of fatigue, rest pauses, the effect of altering the lighting, and similar factors, it soon became a search for the element that was responsible for increased output when working conditions were not improved. This dynamic factor that raised output when experimental changes did not warrant it was morale, and this morale was due apparently to human relationships on the job. The Hawthorne experiment[6] began with an examination of the physical features of the work and ended with an interviewing program that was planned as permanent.

The discovery that human relations are as important as light and hours of work was made only slowly during the many months over which the experiment was carried on. The experimental group of girl workers was so small that they all became friendly. They were assigned a special room and a special supervisor. Some special adjustments were made when the girls asked for them. After a while the girls began to feel like important people, even when they were at work. When this happened, morale went up, and output went up with it.

It is not difficult to see why the output went up, nor is it difficult to see that good interviewing everywhere carries on some of the best functions introduced at Hawthorne in the famous experiment. The interviewer treats his interviewee as an equal, listens to him, asks his opinion, considers his judgments, shares his problems, congratulates him in success, con-

---

[6] See Homans, op. cit., p. 152.

soles him in difficulties, and makes him realize he is part of a living enterprise.

Kornhauser, in an analysis of employee morale,[7] divided it into three main forces: (1) factors within the individual himself, such as age, health, and ability; (2) factors outside the individual and plant, such as home conditions, unions, social and economic forces; (3) factors in employment, such as wages, supervision, advancement, security, and worker recognition. A glance at these factors indicates that they are the kind of subjects that come up for discussion most often in interviews. If decisions are made on a worker's age, health, or ability without giving him an interview opportunity to express himself, these decisions are certain to turn up again later in poor morale. Even adverse decisions on age and health can be softened and put into effect without damaging company morale by an experienced interviewer.

Where counseling interviewing is practiced, outside factors such as home conditions or economic troubles may be brought to the surface and the interviewee relieved of the emotional pressure he has been under. Even where there is no formal adjustment interviewing, skilled interviewing in transfers, promotions, and follow-ups can do much to make people feel that they are valued as human beings and not merely as eight-hour-a-day automatons. Everywhere, in large plants and small, such factors as wages, supervision, advancement, and transfer are handled in interviews. When these interviews are skilfully carried on, they do more than merely solve the specific problem of the interview. Careful, friendly interviews carry over into a liking for and appreciation of the company.

Improving Public Relations.—Some people who apply for jobs do not receive them and go back directly into the community. When these individuals are given no consideration, made to wait unnecessarily, and are turned away rudely, they carry bad feelings into the community. Such bad feelings can spread far and wide, holding back good prospective employees

[7] Arthur Kornhauser, "Psychological Studies of Employees Attitudes," *Journal of Consulting Psychology*, VIII (May-June 1944).

and interfering with the company's sales. The most regrettable fact here is that such unpleasantness usually is unnecessary and avoidable. Skilful employment interviewing can usually retain the good will even of people who cannot be employed. The applicants who are employed, moreover, stay at their work only eight hours each day. The rest of the time is spent out in the community where they can create either good will or bad will for the firm.

It is probably true that anything which makes a person feel bad for a long period of time also undermines his good will toward the firm that employs him. This reaction is due to the fact that emotions are pervasive; a person who is depressed sees the whole world "blue." This is one of the reasons why some companies have found that general personnel or adjustment interviewing among their employees is desirable. A person cannot be sharply divided into a husband, an employee, and a citizen. An interviewer helping to solve some personal problem outside the plant, frequently produces a better worker. It is also true that the solution of a work problem may result in a better citizen. In both cases the worker, spending much of his time in the community, spreads abroad his good feelings toward the company.

Interviewing is everyone's opportunity. A careful examination of interviewing indicates that it is an executive tool of great value, but also contributes to the training of better executives. When the best people are assigned to interviewing and the best kind of interviewing done, it will be found that, not only the employees, but the company also has profited materially.

PART II
TECHNIQUES OF INTERVIEWING

Chapter 10

THE INTERVIEWER MATCHES
MEN AND JOBS

If the interviewer were omnipotent, he would not need to ask questions to match men with jobs. Were he ignorant, he would not know what questions to ask. Actually he possesses incomplete knowledge; he knows many facts and looks for more which will complete the picture.

The employment interviewer must be familiar with the requirements of every job in the plant. This knowledge should be sufficiently detailed to enable him to determine whether an applicant has the intelligence, education, experience, skill, and personality to do any particular job. The need for this knowledge is quickly impressed upon the interviewer when he meets applicants with specialized knowledge who try to "show him up." Moreover, he will certainly not want to appear stupid or inept in the eyes of the foremen and supervisors by sending them candidates who are unsuitable for the work. He will want his work as interviewer to be sound and his selections to make good employees. The interviewer cannot, of course, be a specialist on all jobs and know everything about them, but he will need both a working knowledge of the job requirements and interviewing skill to "hold his own."

Looking ahead, we can see that the information the interviewer will need centers about two general objects: jobs and men. The interviewer must match these two. For purposes of simplicity, this discussion is devoted mainly to the employment interview. Other types of interviews, except the counseling interview which is treated elsewhere, have similar requirements.

Job Descriptions and Hiring Specifications

Jobs Provide Us with the First Field of Exploration.—The information about the jobs should include both the usual job descriptions and hiring specifications; that is, a description of all the activities of the jobs and the necessary human abilities to carry on these activities. This information will be gathered from every available source. Actual experience on the job by the interviewer is, of course, desirable where possible. Personal observations and discussions with supervisors and workers are of major importance. Details may be obtained from a job description made for other purposes, such as wage standardization. In some cases, the interviewer may ask foremen or workers to fill out a job questionnaire.

Smyth and Murphy[1] state that six items of information are basic and should be found in every job description. They are:

1. Job title.
2. Summary. A brief description of the job must be provided.
3. Work performed. Every task should be itemized with the proportion of time given to it.
4. Tools. Equipment and materials should be named.
5. Physical environment of the worker and safety factors must be described.
6. Employee attributes, such as education and experience, must be known.

Such a job description is useful in a great many ways. It is a help in preparing a promotion schedule, establishing a training program, or estimating costs. It is a sort of omnibus instrument. To slant such a job description to his own use, the interviewer will want to know what "materials" mean with regard to responsibility, what "tools" mean with regard to mechanical ability or dexterity, and what "physical environment" means when related to strength and endurance. For the purposes of employment interviewing, the job description can

[1] Richard C. Smyth and Matthew J. Murphy, *Job Evaluation and Employee Rating* (New York: McGraw-Hill Book Co., Inc., 1946), p. 68.

well be restated and combined with other data the interviewer
has gathered in terms directly related to the worker. For
example:

1. Physical activities
2. Mental activities
3. Emotional strain
4. Social activities
5. The job environment
6. The need for supervision

The following illustration gives a typical job description
for a salesman of office machines, except that the percentage
of time on each activity is not provided.

1. Job title: Salesman (office machines).
2. Summary: Office machines, such as typewriters, duplicators,
   calculating machines, and adding machines, are demon-
   strated and sold to customers in their own stores and of-
   fices. Efficiency and savings made by machines must be
   shown. Salesmen must travel through East and Middle
   West, except for a few women to be placed in the large
   centers, such as Boston, Philadelphia, and New York. The
   salary is $60 plus drawing against commission.
3. Work performed: The salesman demonstrates machines
   and shows economies obtainable through their operation.
   He also demonstrates attachments which increase the
   range and usefulness of old machines. He discusses of-
   fice procedures and practices in their relation to the ma-
   chines. He must be able to work rapidly and accurately,
   achieving high production without apparent effort. He
   sells machines.
4. Tools, equipment, materials: Screwdrivers and small
   wrenches are used in demonstrating machines and attach-
   ments. The materials are ink and paper.
5. Physical environment: The environment is that of custom-
   ers' shops and offices. The risks are the normal risks of
   traveling.

6. *Employee attributes:* A high-school graduate is required, with elementary knowledge of accounting and considerable practical experience in office procedures. Good potentialities are of more importance than experience as the company trains many people for this work. Experience with any kind of mechanical equipment is helpful, as is specialized knowledge of any line of business, such as the hotel business or banking.

The interviewer will do well now to analyze this job description in terms of the man who might do the work. For example:

1. *Physical activities:* Salesman travels most of the time. He must be away from home several days at a time. He uses small wrenches and screwdrivers to fasten and release attachments to machines, activities which require fair to average mechanical ability. He must operate the machines rapidly and accurately, which calls for good dexterity and quick reactions. Sometimes he will lift and move machines such as typewriters.

2. *Mental activities:* Salesmen must be above average in intelligence, be quick and accurate with figures, and have at least a high-school background with specialized experience. He must have a good vocabulary and be a good speaker in order to express clear and precise explanations.

3. *Emotional strain:* The salesman is away from home a good deal. He depends mostly on commission selling in a highly competitive field.

4. *Social activities:* He must talk with office managers in large and small business. He sells a fairly expensive product.

5. *The job environment:* The environment is that of hotels, trains, and customers' offices.

6. *Supervision:* No information is given on supervision.

The interviewer should now examine each major heading to determine whether he has all the information that can be obtained.

Relative to physical activities, the suggestion comes to

mind that age might be a factor. It is undesirable to send a person on the road when he is too young and unstable or too old and liable to break down under the strain of irregularity. What ages then should be considered? How is our salesman to get from place to place? If he is to drive a car, that should be known. Just how often will he have to lift or move machines? What is the maximum weight he will have to lift? Have the speed and accuracy he needs been determined by any objective reaction tests? Has the hand dexterity required been so determined? Or must these abilities be estimated? Does the salesman stand on his feet and walk to the extent that these activities become critically important in selecting an applicant? The interviewer had better go back and get the answers to these questions before he starts his interviews.

Considering mental activities, we again ask if there are any objective standards for quickness in numerical response, vocabulary, and alertness. What is meant by "specialized experience," and what are its limits? A better definition of this factor should be obtained.

Analysis of emotional strain gives rise to certain related questions. Is money ever advanced beyond the usual drawing account? How large a family can the average salesman support at this kind of work? What is meant by "highly competitive"? What is the percentage of failures on this job? What is done with men who "don't make good"? How much financial responsibility does the work entail?

Social activities suggest other questions. The interviewer will want to know whether drinking is considered a prerequisite, a purely personal matter, or a liability in this kind of selling and whether the job calls for much aggressiveness. Are most good salesmen in this field "joiners" and club members?

Relating the Job to Other Jobs.—When the job examination is completed and the hiring specifications are ready, the interviewer will still want to know how the job relates to other jobs. What kinds of work feed into it, and where do its workers come from? Into what kinds of work can they be expected

to be promoted? And, if they get into the work and do not like it, what are the similar types of work to which they can be transferred? To gather this information the interviewer should be familiar with the occupational dictionary and its job families.

Many years ago a number of experienced psychologists and personnel men came to the conclusion that the job situation was "a mess." Different jobs sometimes went by the same name, and in different industries the same jobs often carried different titles. No clear relationships had been established between one job and another, a condition which made transfer from one job to another very difficult and slowed the whole procedure of evaluating a worker's experience. Someone suggested that a very pertinent analogy could be found in the science of biology before it had grown into a regular science on the basis of a thorough system of classification. Why could not the science of jobs be put on a firm foundation in the same manner?

The effort was made, and jobs were classified on the bases of (1) similar activities; (2) similar worker characteristics or traits; (3) corresponding machines, tools, and instruments; and (4) similar materials.[2] The Occupational Dictionary now defines and classifies 17,452 separate jobs. These job descriptions have been made from careful job analyses of the following basic job families:

1. The professional and managerial occupations
2. Clerical and sales occupations
3. Service occupations
4. Agriculture, fishing, forestry, and kindred occupations
5. Skilled occupations
6. Semiskilled occupations
7. Unskilled occupations

The interviewer, by referring to the Occupational Dictionary, can estimate the value of an applicant's experience—the

---

[2] These data have now been published and can be obtained from the Superintendent of Documents, U. S. Government Printing Office, Washington 25, D. C.

degree of similarity between the jobs he has held and the job he is applying for. If a worker presents experience from the same job family, he will have some of the basic skills, even though he has not done the precise work he is applying for. The interviewer must be cautious in estimating, however, since the applicant's experience, even though it sounds similar, may have little relationship to the job at hand.

The interviewer should follow an examination of the Occupational Dictionary with a scrutiny of the jobs in his own plant. With the background acquired from the Dictionary and some study, he should be in a position to recommend transfers and promotions within the company when these seem desirable, as well as to select suitable applicants for open jobs.

Of course, the interviewer's study of the job at hand and the related jobs does not completely ready him to meet the applicants. He must also be prepared to answer the interviewee's questions about such matters as company policies, vacations, methods of payment, and promotional possibilities.

Observation of the Applicant

To match the job with the man the interviewer must know something of the nature of man, not in the sense of individual differences but in the ways in which all people resemble each other. Individual differences were examined in Chapter 2 when we turned our attention to the interviewees and how to differentiate among them. At this point we want to set up a sort of "man description" to fit the job description. The human factors involved can be arranged under the same classification we used in the hiring specifications; namely: (1) physical factors, (2) mental factors, (3) emotions, (4) sociability, (5) influence of the environment, and (6) need for supervision.

Physical Factors.—The physical factors relate to such points as:

1. Age
2. Cleanliness

3. Clothing
4. Dexterity and skill
5. Endurance
6. General attractiveness
7. Habits such as drinking, smoking
8. Height and weight
9. Level of usual physical activity
10. Quickness of reaction or response
11. Sense of rhythm
12. Strength
13. Accuracy of senses, such as hearing and sight
14. Vital capacity
15. Voice

All of these factors will not be important on any one job, but on one job or another they are all important. By continually examining jobs for their relationships to such characteristics and by continually observing applicants for the ways in which they exhibit these characteristics, the interviewer improves his work. Some of these factors, such as cleanliness, suitability of clothing, and general attractiveness, can be determined by subjective estimate only, and the interviewer must make sure that his estimates are impersonal and general. He should not, for example, inject his own preferences in clothing into his estimates of other people. Other characteristics cannot be estimated subjectively but must be determined by test. One of these is vital capacity (the amount of air that can be blown at one breath), which is one indication of good physical functioning.

Mental Factors.—The mental factors which must be considered in matching the job and the man are the following:

1. Intelligence or alertness
2. Special aptitudes
    Clerical
    Mechanical
    Mnemonic
    Musical

3. Education, training, information
4. Experience in using abilities and information
5. Common sense

Intelligence is the general aptitude for learning new things and solving problems, and is contrasted to special aptitudes for particular fields, such as music or mechanics. It is contrasted again to knowledge since intelligence remains fairly constant through an individual's adult years, not increasing or decreasing very much until old age comes on. There have been many studies of the constancy of intelligence, but they relate mostly to growing children. Whatever the controversy about the constancy while growth continues, there is not much difference of opinion about the stability of intelligence in a mature person. Knowledge, on the other hand, can be increased rapidly by intensive study or just as rapidly forgotten if there is no use for the information.

The term "intelligence" came into wide use with the development of intelligence tests. It can be measured more accurately than it can be estimated in an interview. When tests are not available, however, the word "alertness" has often been used to help the interviewer know what to look for.

One of the theories of the components of intelligence may help to clarify it further. The three main constituent functions of general intelligence, according to this theory, are facility in using numbers, in using words, and in using diagrams. It is of these three kinds of problems that the Army General Classification Test was constructed.

Tests administered in both the Army and industry indicate that different levels of intelligence are required for different kinds of work. Occupations are lined up roughly from the lowest alertness requirements to the highest in the following order: (1) unskilled labor, (2) semi-skilled labor, (3) skilled labor, (4) clerical and business skills, and (5) the professions. Occupations can also be put in order of rank from the average scores that people in them obtained in the Army General Classification Test. In observing these occupational rankings it must be remembered that they represent averages and that

there are some very alert individuals in all occupations, even those with the lowest averages. A selected list of the average intelligence scores of workers in various occupations, ranked from lowest to highest, follows the following order: farm worker, miner, barber, truck driver, painter, auto serviceman, salesman, draftsman, lawyer, medical student, mechanical engineering student, accountant.[3]

Special aptitudes are similar to the general aptitude of intelligence except that they apply to particular activities that are not always closely related to general activities. An aptitude for music is a typical example. Some people with very little intelligence rank very high in their aptitudes for rhythm and tonal control. Some people of very high intelligence also have good musical aptitudes, but some do not. Since there is no close relationship between musical aptitudes and general intelligence, musical capacity is called a special aptitude.

A person having any of these special aptitudes would be able to learn rapidly according to his talent if he were given the opportunity. In case he already has had the opportunity, he will have a high level of skill, again according to his degree of talent. This aptitude a person carries with him, more or less unchanged, all his adult life. He can learn at a given rate if he has the opportunity.

Aptitudes can be estimated to some extent in the interview, but they are most accurately determined by test. If an individual has interests and hobbies along mechanical lines, it is reasonably good evidence that he has some special mechanical ability. It is not always certain, however, that he lacks mechanical aptitudes if he has no such interests or activities, for his environment may have prevented him from developing them.

The special aptitudes of common value in business are the clerical, the mechanical, and the mnemonic (memory) aptitudes. Of the three, the mnemonic aptitudes (there seem to be several of them) are least accurately measured by test.

[3] N. Stewart, "A.G.C.T. Scores of Army Personnel Grouped by Occupations," *Occupations*, XXVI (1947), 5-41.

Tests can measure education, training, and information reasonably well for restricted fields, such as the information required on a particular job. Usually, however, the broader aspects of education are estimated by the years spent in school or college. It would be well to add to this measure such considerations as magazines and books read, when these can be determined with any degree of accuracy, and perhaps the amount of traveling done.

The factor of experience and its evaluation are discussed in detail in Chapter 11. Here it is enough to note that experience is called for in many job specifications and that, for any particular applicant, it must be evaluated accurately.

Common sense is a term to be used with caution. It has been facetiously said that people have common sense when they think as we do, and perhaps this is as good a use of the term as any. If, however, we wish to use the term seriously, it can be defined as meaning just what the words say, a tendency to the common opinion—a moderate degree of conservatism. The interviewer, of course, as the judge of what is "common" or "conservative" must scrupulously check his own ideas in these respects.

The Emotions.—Emotions penetrate through our entire lives and cannot be considered as isolated experiences. But, for that matter, neither can physical or mental activities be considered entirely by themselves. Physical activities involve mental activities, and both of these are involved in the social, so our categories are actually points of emphasis. Of these reference points, it may be said, however, that the emotions are the least independent. Emotional stability, for instance, is partly a matter of mental maturity and perspective but the instability of the adolescent, for example, is related very largely to great changes, both physical and mental, which occur at this age.

In attempting to evaluate emotional stability, questions can be asked directly of the interviewee to decide whether or not he has a fiery temper. Since having a temper is condoned or even admired in our society, most people are not adverse to

discussing it if the proper words are used. Few people will admit to being bad tempered, although many are proud of high temper. The question is, of course, how much a person gives way to his temper, or his amorous tendencies, or moodiness.

Emotions permeate our thinking and influence our actions. The importance of this fact has been widely recognized. The word most commonly used in industry to identify the phenomenon is "attitude." Many experts in interviewing say that attitudes are the most important factors to be determined in an interview. Expensive attitude surveys are often carried on to determine the emotional thinking of a group of employees.

Attitudes, then, must be understood and evaluated. To do this, we might well start with a definition. Attitudes are learned or developed complexes of emotionally toned thinking which are built around a core, usually some tangible object. Attitudes will involve:

1. Ideas, more or less systematized
2. Strong feelings or emotions
3. Motivation as indicated by the emotion involved
4. Activities or habits as a result of the motivation
5. A core consisting of an object
6. Stability or a degree of permanence

Since attitudes are learned, they can be changed or forgotten. This happens slowly, however, since the ideas are systematized and attached to some object which is usually permanent. Attitudes are among the relatively permanent parts of a person's emotional life. An example is the attitude a man or woman might have toward wealth. Money, in this case, would be the core or object around which thoughts, emotions, and habits are organized. If the attitude is strong, or well developed, it will control important aspects of the person's life.

In exploring an applicant's mind for attitudes, the interviewer has several points of departure. He can look for objects or possessions such as his home, his clothing, his car, his stamp collection, around which a person's thoughts may have been

organized. He can look for activities such as fishing, union activities, politics, church activities, and club activities around which systematized ideas and feelings may have grown. He should keep alert throughout the interview for any signs of emotion and probe a little around the subjects to which the emotions seem attached. He may look for activities that have continuity, such as years of activity with some hobby. He may search for the person's opinion on this topic and that. All these are points of departure and will lead, if skilfully followed, to discovering and laying bare the individual attitudes.

All attitudes, of course, are not of equal strength or importance. There are weak, indifferent attitudes, hardly able to maintain their existence, as well as long-standing, highly emotional attitudes that influence the person's whole life. The importance as well as the existence of attitudes must be determined in the interview.

Sociability.—Sociability is a very important aspect of a worker's life. If he is liked by his fellow workers, the morale of the whole force is improved. If he is disliked, and particularly if he scatters subversive ideas of any kind, he can spread social poison.

To some extent, a person's social life can be determined by the social activities in which he takes part, and these can be easily learned through questions about the interviewee's membership in groups. Does he belong to any clubs, lodges, political parties, unions, social or religious organizations? If so, does he take an active part? If the individual takes part in a good deal of organized social life, he is probably sociable by preference, but if he belongs to no organizations, it does not necessarily imply that he is a recluse. Some very social people simply are not "joiners." They may have many personal friends but belong to no organizations.

The usual clichés used with respect to the characteristic of sociability are "introvert" and "extrovert." The introvert is primarily interested in ideas and the "whys" and "wherefores" of things. He is likely to be a daydreamer and sometimes becomes isolated from everyday reality. The extrovert is more

interested in going places and doing things, and meeting people. The usual difficulty with the terms extrovert and introvert is that they actually refer to relative degrees of activity, but are used by most people as though they referred to standard, separate states of being. It is always the degree of the condition in which the interviewer is interested.

Another aspect of social life that may be important is that related to a person's dominance or aggressiveness in a social situation as contrasted to his tendency to submit. This characteristic, though supposedly always present, may be difficult to determine; since an individual may become very dominant on his job although he was very submissive in the interviewer's office. Or the individual may be dominant with one person and submissive with another. There is often, however, a habitual tendency toward aggressiveness or submission, and when this is true, it will influence the individual's relationships with his fellow workers.

All the social aspects of a person's life are learned, and, of course, all people do not learn the same things. It may be advisable to question the interviewee on his attitudes toward those of a different race or sex. There is no innate reason why any person should not work happily with another person of any race, but many people learn imagined superiorities or aversions. It is true that customs and habits of thought differ with different peoples and that an individual can well feel more at home in one group than another. To equalize opportunities some states have made it illegal to discuss race or religion in an employment interview. A person's attitude toward those of the other sex can be an equally potent social factor. Some individuals are inhibited in working with the opposite sex and some others are annoyed under such conditions, even though most people are well adjusted.

Still another aspect of a worker's social life relates to his habits. Many a person has developed personal habits that disturb others and may cause his fellow-workers to avoid him. Some years ago Cason [4] made a study of these annoying habits

---

[4] Hulsey Cason, *Common Annoyances* (Princeton: Psychological Review Co, 1913), pp. 32 61.

and classified them according to the extent they annoyed others. It is useful for an interviewer to know what some of these annoyances are. A few of the more common ones from Cason's list follow.

1. A person habitually arguing.
2. A boisterous person attracting attention to himself in public.
3. A person telling me to do something when I am just about to do it.
4. A person giving me advice not even asked for.
5. A person telling me to listen when I am already listening.
6. A very self-satisfied person.
7. A person bragging about his ancestors or himself.
8. A person making gestures with his hands when he talks.
9. A person calling me endearing names.
10. A person putting his hands on me.
11. A person being inquisitive about my personal affairs.
12. A person making excuses for his errors.
13. A girl continually giggling.
14. A person continually looking at his hands and rubbing them together.
15. A person sucking his teeth.
16. A person continually rearranging the clothes he is wearing.
17. A woman applying cosmetics in public.
18. A person removing food from his teeth by means of his nails or fingers.
19. A person sitting with his mouth open.

The interviewer will want to avoid generalizing too widely from what happens in the interview, but he should be alert to these possible flaws in the applicant's personality. With these various possibilities before him, the interviewer will want to evaluate the interviewee's social possibilities.

The Influence of the Environment.—Having examined the social environment, we turn to the material environment to find that we are influenced here through our senses. Light, color, odors, temperatures, required work postures, and noise

are among the important factors of the material environment. Some of our reactions here are inherited and common to all people, but some reactions are learned. All people are alike in showing unfavorable responses to too much heat or cold, bad lighting, bad smells, and noise. Learning is indicated in people who have either a marked aversion for such things as confining work areas or loud talking and laughing, or strong preferences to be near a door or fire escape, for example. Were it not for the learning factor, one person could be put into a necessarily bad environment as readily as another qualified person. Individual learning, however, leaves people with many preferences and aversions.

In talking about the environment, the interviewee may be projecting his own peace of mind or lack of it. Healthy young people who are comfortable will occasionally imagine that they can stand any environment until they get into it. Their stay is often very brief. On the other hand, there are poorly adjusted people with unhappy personal lives who anticipate trouble everywhere without finding it much more often in one place than another. A skilful interviewer will examine and evaluate these factors.

The Need for Supervision.—Two factors will usually determine a person's need for supervision. One is the extent of his knowledge and skill; the other is the degree to which he is a responsible worker. An applicant's knowledge or skill is a well-understood topic, even if there are difficulties in determining it in the interview. These difficulties and ways to overcome them are discussed in Chapter 15, so we will not consider them here. A man's sense of responsibility, however, requires some definition and discussion.

The willingness to be responsible for our work and tools depends upon how mature we have become. This maturity is not a simple matter of growth; many people grow up and grow old yet never develop mental maturity. The person who is maturing has a number of things to learn. He learns first that all time is not compressed into the present; that things have a past and a future. He learns to wait for desirable prizes.

He moves, also, from the land of make-believe and daydream to the land of fact. He grows from childish dependence upon the help of other people into independence. His interests widen from an infantile preoccupation with himself to a realization and interest in the world around him. By examining these various channels of development, the interviewer can determine whether an individual is really maturing or merely growing older. The answer to this question, aside from the matter of knowledge and skill, will indicate how much supervision the person needs.

Sources of Information

The interviewer has now examined jobs and people in the same terminology. This procedure should facilitate the matching of the two. We must now consider the sources of the information we must acquire about the applicant.

The interview is our main source, but interview time is very valuable. It should not be overloaded; all information that can be determined as well by other means should be so obtained and excluded from the area of the interview. Some other means that can be used for acquiring the desired information are:

1. The application blank
2. Letters of reference
3. Letters of application
4. Former employers and schools attended
5. Written documents
6. Photographs (For memory value)
7. The physical examination
8. Tests

The application blank can be a source of most of the factual information about the applicant that can be answered by a "yes" or "no" or by a one- or two-word statement. It will make a record of name, address, age, sex, education, jobs held, hobbies, and other personal facts that may be required. When the interviewer goes over any of the same material in the

interview, he should have some specific objective, such as to determine consistency of reporting data about jobs or to find out a person's attitude toward some of the facts of his life The interviewer, for example, may want to know if he *liked* his former jobs and feels that he learned a great deal from them

Letters of reference are called for by many employers One cannot state in advance how useful they will be, although it is usually agreed that they must be checked for reliability before much reliance is placed in them A letter presented by the applicant is not as good as one written in confidence directly to the prospective employer There are occasions, however, when even a carried reference is written so frankly that it wins a certain acceptance, although one seldom encounters such candor as in the following classical letter of "recommendation" written by Benjamin Franklin

> Paris, April 2, 1777
>
> Sir
>
> The bearer of this, who is going to America, presses me to give him a letter of recommendation, though I know nothing of him, not even his name This may seem extraordinary, but I assure you it is not uncommon here Sometimes, indeed, one unknown person brings another, equally unknown, to recommend him, and sometimes they recommend one another! As to this gentleman, I must refer you to himself for his character and merits, with which he is certainly better acquainted than I can possibly be I recommend him, however, to those civilities which every stranger, of whom one knows no harm, has a right to and I request you will do him all the favor that, on further acquaintance, you shall find him to deserve I have the honor to be, etc
>
> Benjamin Franklin

Letters of application are particularly helpful when they give a summary of an applicant's work history and education Such letters can be required of applicants for the more advanced jobs and can give a good deal of help in the initial process of selection

The telephone can be a valuable source of information about applicants. When an employment interviewer calls a previous employer on the phone and identifies himself, he can frequently get the direct statement he wants about the applicant's qualifications. People spoken to directly and confidentially are more likely to give the information wanted than they are in letters of reference.

Former employers and schools attended can usually be depended upon for factual information, the employers for the names of the jobs the applicant has held and his manner of leaving, the schools for grades earned and extra-curricular achievements. It is not always safe, however, to depend too much upon the personal reactions of the applicant's former associates. An individual may be disliked for standing up for his rights, for attempting to help someone else who perhaps did not deserve the help, or for many other reasons. If an individual was discharged or disliked in some previous situation, such a fact should be weighed. A person who has earned the dislike of others in any situation has taken upon himself to some extent the burden of proof. He must present a particularly good case to win approval.

An example of the applicant's written work can be useful and is often called for. Some companies have the applicant write for a few minutes while he is waiting for his interview. Material used in this way should always be written on company paper and under enough supervision to determine that it is the applicant's own work. From such work, his handwriting, spelling, knowledge of grammar, and ability to express himself coherently can be determined. If the applicant is given a free choice in the selection of his topic, the written work may reveal some of his attitudes and interests.

is a minor factor but of enough value to justify the request for a photograph. The interviewer should be cautious, however, and avoid the attempt to interpret character or ability from the photograph. At best, photographs are reports of one instant only, and limited to two dimensions of that moment At worst, they are touched up and made over. Experiments indicate that judgments of character made from photographs are not reliable.

The two remaining sources of information, physical examination and tests, are not discussed here. The physical examination is not the responsibility of the interviewer, and tests will be considered in detail in Chapter 14.

Chapter 11

THE EVALUATION OF EXPERIENCE

Occasionally the employment interviewer meets a mature or somewhat elderly applicant who states in a condescending voice, "I have had twenty-two years of experience." The implication is plain: "You, Mr. Interviewer, aren't qualified to evaluate my ability. Just send me in, and I'll go to work." Confronted with such a situation, the interviewer must do some quick thinking. First, just how good was that twenty-two years of experience? Second, how much of that experience is usable in the job which the applicant is seeking. Let us follow the analysis of these two segments.

The Value of Experience.—How good is experience in general, and what does it do for us? Obviously it is of no value if we do not learn from it, for experience is merely another word for learning. It usually means the kind of learning we acquire on our jobs and during our life in general, as contrasted to the more formal training we get in schools. Consequently, the question, "Was that experience valuable?" is better stated, "Did he learn anything?" It is not the situation alone that makes for experience; it is also the participant. So when an applicant states in a sonorous voice, "I have had twenty-two years of experience," the interviewer's unhappy mental answer may be "Poor fellow, what were you doing all those years? The job you are applying for can be done by a young man just out of school."

all seen the man who was further behind at the end of his life than he was at the beginning; he had lost in attractiveness and had learned nothing. In view of such possibilities, the interviewer is well advised to begin his analysis with consideration of the questions: "What kind of person learns?" and, "In what situations is he likely to learn the most?"

Requirements for Learning Through Experience

Intelligence.—One requirement for learning is inherited ability or intelligence. If the interviewer has been using tests and finds an applicant with an IQ above 100, he has one indication that the applicant has learned and will learn from his experiences. Unfortunately a high IQ does not give assurance that a person has learned the things that would do him the most good. It implies only that learning has taken place, even though that learning might be mainly the mastery of mischief. In school and college, high intelligence does not give assurance of good grades, but when a student possesses this attribute and earns poor grades, the assumption is that something is holding him back. Bright people can worry too much, project their troubles, be unsocial, and become nuisances. These people, however, do have the equipment for learning, and it is among such individuals that we may expect to find the individuals who profit most from their experience.

Attitude.—A second personal requirement is attitude or the eagerness to learn. So, after the applicant has been examined for intelligence (the ability to learn), it is well to turn attention to his attitude or eagerness to learn. The learning attitude is well illustrated by an anecdote about Socrates. When Socrates was told by his oracle that he was the wisest man in Athens, he doubted it. He went about questioning other men to see if it were possible that they knew less than he. He found that with most men the assumption of being right and knowing the answers kept them from learning more. He found that tradesmen, particularly, proud of a special skill, might possess the skill they claimed, but that their pride usu-

ally spread to other fields where it had no justification and interfered with their learning. If Socrates was right, the attitude which will enable one to gain most from experience is found in that person who places a high value on wisdom, but feels that he does not have it himself.

Orientation.—Another characteristic of the person who learns most from experience is his generally accurate orientation. This means that the person has a clear idea of what life is about and where he is going in it; it indicates that he has set goals which he tries continually to reach. A little reflection will show that experience cannot mean much to the person without purposes. What is the difference whether such a person loses half an hour, half a year, or half of his lifetime if he had no particular use for that time? The person who is busy bringing to his life particular achievements will notice immediately when a mistake is made. The mistake delays him in reaching his goal. The very possibility of defining a particular act as a mistake is derived from the existence of a goal. Without a goal, there would be no basis for the definition.

Consequently, when the interviewer finds someone who has his plans for the year—or for his life—well worked out, he has found someone in a position to learn much from experience. The person who floats around on the surface of things, with no particular destination, lacks reference points to give meaning to his adventures. He may live a much more novel and varied life, yet learn much less from it.

The criterion of orientation will help the interviewer evaluate the man who has had many previous jobs. If all the changes fit clearly into a well-thought-out life plan, they may indicate that the man has selected, while still young and unattached, bits of experience that he believes will be of particular value to him later on. Of course, not very many men of this caliber come along; most men who shift from job to job make their moves blindly. Yet, some of them wake up and aim for their goals, at least to some extent, to take advantage of the experience that has been thrust upon them. The inter-

viewer will, therefore, usually do well to find how successfully the applicant can explain a pattern in the changes that appear in his record. If he can arrange them all as logical aids toward a specific goal, he may still be a person worthy of careful consideration, even though he has changed jobs often.

Job orientation is a narrower concept than life orientation, but to the employer it may mean as much. The applicant may, therefore, be questioned to determine whether he understands the purpose of his work, how it fits in with other jobs to accomplish a larger purpose, and how that again dovetails into some still larger purpose. It is probably a good mind, one headed for advancement, that can explain clearly the integration of minor functions and purposes into a business. One indication of job orientation that sometimes appears is the ability of a person to develop useful ideas and suggestions about his job. It is difficult to develop a practical suggestion unless the function of the tool, or job into which it fits, is well understood.

Motivation.—In addition to the individual characteristics of a person, there are certain external forces which affect the process of learning through experience. One of these is good motivation. Motivation, in itself, does not guarantee learning, but there is no learning without it. The interviewer will look, then, for indications of motivation in the past experience of an applicant. There are various symptoms or signs which he may explore.

The simplest indication of job motivation is found in wages. If a person feels that he has been well paid, the implication is that he co-operated and did his best. If he tried to do the job properly, it is very probable that he learned something from his activities, unless they were too simple to provide problems. Similar to the motivation of wages is the motivation of enjoyable work with congenial people. Such employment implies open-mindedness and a willingness to help reach the assigned quotas of work, and this mental state implies learning—provided, again, that the environment presented difficulties to be overcome.

Another indication of good motivation is the fact that a person stayed on his job for a long time and won some promotion. Perhaps the longevity of employment, even without promotion, may be due to good motivation, but it might also be due to an inability to change. When an applicant gives twenty-two years of experience on the same job with the same firm, it obviously does not indicate as much learning as when that twenty-two years carried the individual from office boy to office manager.

Still another, and one of the most important indicators of good motivation, is responsibility. The great value of responsibility is that it gives meaning to experience by putting the motivation in the right places. The person who is blamed when things go wrong learns from his mistakes. When a person carries responsibility, he has goals of accomplishment set for him and those goals which he tries to reach give meaning to all his efforts. A number of times in the past, large banks in New York have gone to some western state and brought in the president of some small bank for a responsible position when there were a number of vice presidents in New York City who could have been given the job. The explanation was that the men from the small cities had had to stand on their own feet and carry responsibility themselves. In the large offices of New York, it was often too easy to get advice and share the responsibility. The person who has been willing to "stick his chin out" and take responsibility for what happens is almost certain to be a person who has learned from experience. Perhaps he has much to learn, but that is another matter.

Practice.—Another of the external forces which affect learning through experience is the previous opportunities available to the applicant. If a person is trying to sell a particular skill it helps if his previous experience required him to exercise that skill. An experienced stenographer, for example, will point out that she had to take down and type many letters every day on her previous job. If a supervisor was responsible for many individuals in his old job as he would be expected

viewer will, therefore, usually do well to find how successfully the applicant can explain a pattern in the changes that appear in his record. If he can arrange them all as logical aids toward a specific goal, he may still be a person worthy of careful consideration, even though he has changed jobs often.

Job orientation is a narrower concept than life orientation, but to the employer it may mean as much. The applicant may, therefore, be questioned to determine whether he understands the purpose of his work, how it fits in with other jobs to accomplish a larger purpose, and how that again dovetails into some still larger purpose. It is probably a good mind, one headed for advancement, that can explain clearly the integration of minor functions and purposes into a business. One indication of job orientation that sometimes appears is the ability of a person to develop useful ideas and suggestions about his job. It is difficult to develop a practical suggestion unless the function of the tool, or job into which it fits, is well understood.

Motivation.—In addition to the individual characteristics of a person, there are certain external forces which affect the process of learning through experience. One of these is good motivation. Motivation, in itself, does not guarantee learning, but there is no learning without it. The interviewer will look, then, for indications of motivation in the past experience of an applicant. There are various symptoms or signs which he may explore.

The simplest indication of job motivation is found in wages. If a person feels that he has been well paid, the implication is that he co-operated and did his best. If he tried to do the job properly, it is very probable that he learned something from his activities, unless they were too simple to provide problems. Similar to the motivation of wages is the motivation of enjoyable work with congenial people. Such employment implies open-mindedness and a willingness to help reach the assigned quotas of work, and this mental state implies learning—provided, again, that the environment presented difficulties to be overcome.

Another indication of good motivation is the fact that a person stayed on his job for a long time and won some promotion. Perhaps the longevity of employment, even without promotion, may be due to good motivation, but it might also be due to an inability to change. When an applicant gives twenty-two years of experience on the same job with the same firm, it obviously does not indicate as much learning as when that twenty-two years carried the individual from office boy to office manager.

Still another, and one of the most important indicators of good motivation, is responsibility. The great value of responsibility is that it gives meaning to experience by putting the motivation in the right places. The person who is blamed when things go wrong learns from his mistakes. When a person carries responsibility, he has goals of accomplishment set for him and those goals which he tries to reach give meaning to all his efforts. A number of times in the past, large banks in New York have gone to some western state and brought in the president of some small bank for a responsible position when there were a number of vice presidents in New York City who could have been given the job. The explanation was that the men from the small cities had had to stand on their own feet and carry responsibility themselves. In the large offices of New York, it was often too easy to get advice and share the responsibility. The person who has been willing to "stick his chin out" and take responsibility for what happens is almost certain to be a person who has learned from experience. Perhaps he has much to learn, but that is another matter.

Practice.—Another of the external forces which affect learning through experience is the previous opportunities available to the applicant. If a person is trying to sell a particular skill it helps if his previous experience required him to exercise that skill. An experienced stenographer, for example, will point out that she had to take down and type many letters every day on her previous job. If a supervisor was responsible for many individuals in his old job as he would be expected

to supervise on the job under consideration, the interviewer should know this. Yet another example of valuable experience is found in the salesman who sold the same kind of goods before and in a volume equal to that which will be expected of him. These examples are another way of saying that, in some degree, a person's learning can be measured or the value of his experience estimated by what he has done. The interviewer must always make sure, however, that these achievements were actually performed independently by means of the applicant's own skill and initiative.

Environment.—We come now to the last aspect of good experience—a rich environment for learning. Not forgetting Shakespeare's warning that "it is the mind that makes the body rich," we must still recognize that even a very good mind is handicapped in a meager environment. Given the mind, the orientation, the motivation, and the practice, there is still the need for instruction and supervision.

There are several indications to determine an environment suitable for learning. The first of these is the matter of the teacher. Did the applicant have a good teacher? In business, this is usually the same question as, "Did the applicant have a good supervisor or foreman?" Much has been written on this aspect of environment with special reference to private secretaries. It has often been noted that private secretaries who have worked under very able executives have a high record of success themselves. This criterion, in fact, is frequently used in the selection of private secretaries. Anyone who has the opportunity to work closely with a successful person is in a good environment for learning.

The problem of the interviewer, however, is to determine whether previous supervisors were unusually able people. Such persons often are not famous. Usually their abilities will be entirely unknown outside their own firms. This becomes, then, one of the areas for the interviewer to investigate with questions. Did the interviewee like or dislike his previous supervisor, and why? What is his estimate of the man's abili-

ties? If he estimates his previous foreman as of inferior ability, it is probable that he did not learn much from him.

Another indicator of a good learning environment is the implication of good methods of work. It is always probable, though not certain, that successful corporations use sound methods. Consequently, if an applicant comes from the research laboratories of Du Pont, or the accounting department of General Motors, or the sales department of The Standard Oil Company, it is probable that he had the opportunity to learn good methods of work. The interviewer will want to investigate these possibilities to make sure that the applicant actually did learn good methods, but the suggestion is there to be followed up.

A final indication of a good learning environment is a situation where a great deal of activity is going on. Many individuals will think back to some period of travel or to their war experiences for an example of this. When a great deal is happening, unless it is all repetition of the same event, the mind is presented with similarities and contrasts that must be put in order. The environment becomes richer. If the person has the mind to appreciate the changes and evaluate them, he learns—or as we say—gains experience.

We find, then, that experience is not merely a matter of time. It is a matter that requires all that goes into a good learning situation. To gain experience a person must have the mind for it. He should be oriented and know what he wants from life, now and in the future. He should be sufficiently motivated to be eager to learn. Where skills are concerned, his past environment should have required him to practice. When these requirements have all been met, the individual still will have gained experience somewhat in proportion to the richness of the environment. That individual has had the best opportunity who has been able to take a vital part in the most varied and important happenings.

Yet we have not really settled whether the applicant's experience is good unless we consider what it is good for. We must now move on to the second part of the problem that was

to supervise on the job under consideration, the interviewer should know this. Yet another example of valuable experience is found in the salesman who sold the same kind of goods before and in a volume equal to that which will be expected of him. These examples are another way of saying that, in some degree, a person's learning can be measured or the value of his experience estimated by what he has done. The interviewer must always make sure, however, that these achievements were actually performed independently by means of the applicant's own skill and initiative.

Environment.—We come now to the last aspect of good experience—a rich environment for learning. Not forgetting Shakespeare's warning that "it is the mind that makes the body rich," we must still recognize that even a very good mind is handicapped in a meager environment. Given the mind, the orientation, the motivation, and the practice, there is still the need for instruction and supervision.

There are several indications to determine an environment suitable for learning. The first of these is the matter of the teacher. Did the applicant have a good teacher? In business, this is usually the same question as, "Did the applicant have a good supervisor or foreman?" Much has been written on this aspect of environment with special reference to private secretaries. It has often been noted that private secretaries who have worked under very able executives have a high record of success themselves. This criterion, in fact, is frequently used in the selection of private secretaries. Anyone who has the opportunity to work closely with a successful person is in a good environment for learning.

The problem of the interviewer, however, is to determine whether previous supervisors were unusually able people. Such persons often are not famous. Usually their abilities will be entirely unknown outside their own firms. This becomes, then, one of the areas for the interviewer to investigate with questions. Did the interviewee like or dislike his previous supervisor, and why? What is his estimate of the man's abili-

can be stated in the terms of business. Everyone, of course, expects some transfer of training; otherwise there would be no accumulation of experience. The man who solves accounting problems month after month transfers his accumulating experience to each new problem he faces. Could we, however, expect him to solve sales problems or engineering problems on the basis of his experience with accounting problems? It may be that his accounting experience would help him some, but on the other hand it might even interfere with his forming sound solutions. A practical problem of transfer of training in a business setting can be found in the example of an applicant who asks for work in the shipping department and presents as experience five years of work in the stock room of his previous employer. Is that experience of any help in the shipping department, and, if so, just how much?

Woodworth and Thorndike attempted to solve this problem for school training by following the college careers of a large number of students who had taken a classical course in high school and contrasting them to an equal number of college students who had taken a business course. After equating the students as accurately as possible for intelligence and home background they found that the classical high-school training had not prepared the students for college much better than had the business training. It did not appear from learning experiments, any more than from research in physiology, that classical training had made the mind stronger than did an equal amount of business studies.

When the results of this study were thoroughly analyzed and added to by other experimenters, some general principles began to appear. These may be stated as follows:

1. There is such a phenomenon as transfer of training, and it may be either positive or negative. That is, sometimes one's experience helps him in another later situation and sometimes it hinders him.

2. The amount of this transfer, in general, is dependent upon the quality of the individual's mind and his ability to generalize. If he knows that his past experience will not fit

proposed at the beginning of this chapter: can the applicant's experience be transferred to the job he wishes to fill?

The Transfer of Experience

There was a day when nearly all educated people received the same training. The assumption was that the mind was something like a muscle; if it were once made strong enough with the right exercise, it could do anything. The correct exercise, it was believed, was the study of the classics, so lawyers, preachers, teachers, doctors, and everyone else who aspired to become educated were required to read Horace and Aristotle in the original. No one gave much consideration to the particular work a person hoped to do in later life. It was the responsibility of education to develop a strong mind, and it was the responsibility of the individual to apply his mind to his own life work.

The theory of the classical education lasted for a long time and still has a few fanatical defenders. Two new sources of information, however, have made the theory difficult to defend. One source of information is research in physiology. In the first place, studies and research in physiology indicate that the nerves of the brain are not like the muscles of the body. Nerves do not get larger and stronger with use. They seem to respond to new demands by forming very specific connections. The trained mind adjusts to specific problems but does not gain any general power that the physiologists can find evidence of. The brain is no larger, the reactions are no faster, the brain waves are no longer or deeper in the educated than in the untrained. The physiologist can present no evidence for study of the classics as a means of making the brain more efficient.

The second source of information that undermined classical education came from the experiments in psychology. Robert S. Woodworth and Edward L. Thorndike carried on some experiments with the specific purpose of determining the effects of classical versus a varied training or, to use their phrase, the extent of "transfer of training." The problem

can be stated in the terms of business. Everyone, of course, expects some transfer of training; otherwise there would be no accumulation of experience. The man who solves accounting problems month after month transfers his accumulating experience to each new problem he faces. Could we, however, expect him to solve sales problems or engineering problems on the basis of his experience with accounting problems? It may be that his accounting experience would help him some, but on the other hand it might even interfere with his forming sound solutions. A practical problem of transfer of training in a business setting can be found in the example of an applicant who asks for work in the shipping department and presents as experience five years of work in the stock room of his previous employer. Is that experience of any help in the shipping department, and, if so, just how much?

Woodworth and Thorndike attempted to solve this problem for school training by following the college careers of a large number of students who had taken a classical course in high school and contrasting them to an equal number of college students who had taken a business course. After equating the students as accurately as possible for intelligence and home background they found that the classical high-school training had not prepared the students for college much better than had the business training. It did not appear from learning experiments, any more than from research in physiology, that classical training had made the mind stronger than did an equal amount of business studies.

When the results of this study were thoroughly analyzed and added to by other experimenters, some general principles began to appear. These may be stated as follows:

1. There is such a phenomenon as transfer of training, and it may be either positive or negative. That is, sometimes one's experience helps him in another later situation and sometimes it hinders him.

2. The amount of this transfer, in general, is dependent upon the quality of the individual's mind and his ability to generalize. If he knows that his past experience will not fit

perfectly without adjustment and is alert to see just where it does fit in and what modifications are necessary, he will transfer or "catch on" much more rapidly than the person who believes experience operates automatically and is always good.

3. Finally, transfer is dependent to quite some extent upon the kind of learning concerned, which for the purpose of this analysis can well be divided into the learning of theories and principles, methods, emotional attitudes, and skills.

Positive and negative transfer can be illustrated by automobile driving. A person who has had much experience in driving a passenger car will transfer this training to the driving of a taxicab and become an expert more quickly than would a novice. On the other hand, a person who has driven a taxicab for a number of years, and is highly skilled in that occupation, would not be a good prospect for the job of bus-driver. In driving his taxicab he has formed the habit of quick starts, slipping between cars, "beating the light" on occasion for a hurried passenger, and "getting through" traffic. Habits of this kind are dangerous in driving a bus. Consequently, a number of bus companies prefer to train a novice to handle their buses rather than to employ an extaxicab driver.

Since generalizing is the process of using a response in many situations, it is obvious that a person will be able to transfer more of his experience if he is able to generalize. In Pavlov's conditioning experiment, previously mentioned, dogs were conditioned to show a "dinner excitement" at the ringing of a bell. Once this response was learned, it did not require the ringing of a particular bell; any of a variety of bell sounds brought the learned response. A human being would quickly generalize further and recognize dinnertime in the ringing of a dinner bell, the sounding of a gong, the clock striking twelve, or the secretary getting up from her typewriter with her pocketbook in hand. Generalizing becomes most useful in the transfer of training when the individual consciously considers the possible relationship between two similar stimuli.

Theories and Generalizations.—When we consider the extent to which different kinds of learning can be transferred, it is obvious that the learning of theories and generalizations, since it is the nature of a theory or a principle to apply in many situations, is very transferable. A theory, in fact, has been defined as something that fits nowhere without a little modification, but with some adjustments explains different things. For this reason, theories and principles are more often taught in colleges rather than in business, where possibly only a few practical applications may be required.

It makes little difference where one learns his theories. He may study them in a small college in the Middle West or in a large university in the East. The chief criterion is his mastery and understanding of them. The theories of economics, thoroughly understood, are of equal value to a businessman no matter where he did his learning. The same is true of the principles of physics, chemistry, or psychology. Granted the equivalence of teachers and stimuli—that is, the equivalence in mastery of the theory—it makes little difference where it was learned.

The interviewer can be relatively sure that if the applicant expresses any general theories about business and the kind of work he does, and takes responsibility for these theories as his own, he will be inclined to apply them after he goes to work. Everyone can learn, of course, and the individual can learn to modify his theories. But, if he has any general principles of wide application that can be related to the new job, they are forces that will have to be dealt with.

Methods of Work.—Methods of work have been found to be relatively transferable, but not as transferable as theories and general principles. Consequently, the employment interviewer will often inquire of the applicant about the methods of work he learned and who trained him. Some law schools and graduate schools of business, for instance, have been claiming superiority for some years because instruction is based on the case method. If case-method thinking in these fields is actually superior to other methods of thinking, it is important

for an employer to know this, for an applicant will probably, though not certainly, transfer methods of work he has learned in his previous experience to the new jobs to which he is assigned.

Emotional Attitudes.—When the learning of emotional adjustments is considered, we find again some evidence of transfer, although not as much as in the transfer of methods of work. What is called "love at first sight" and the instant attraction to or dislike of some people without apparent reason are examples of transfer of emotions from previous experience. A relatively common example of this type of transfer in business is the transfer of an attitude towards authority. Some people treat all bosses alike. They may be servile, hostile, or overfriendly, but, to them, every "boss" is a person to be treated in a certain way. This attitude is not usually conscious, but it is a factor to be dealt with, nonetheless. An individual who has developed an antagonistic or servile attitude towards all supervisors is harder to work with than one who can be frank and friendly. The psychoanalysts tell us that certain extreme attitudes towards authority are frequently transferred from childhood attitudes toward parents.

In business we find emotional attitudes transferred when a person is quite friendly with nearly everyone, when a person is rather hostile to most people, and when a person is rather prim and reserved with almost everybody. Yet, such transfers have their limits. We do form friendships and treat our friends differently than we do others. Sometimes we have enemies and treat them differently again. A great many men have different attitudes for their family and their business associates. We do not transfer emotional attitudes as easily as we do methods of work. The interviewer, then, must not assume that the applicant will be antagonistic to his new supervisor because he was antagonistic to his previous one, but he will have to recognize this as a possibility. If an individual's relationships have been bad with several supervisors, he still may do better in a new environment, but the possibilities do not seem very bright. In the same way, if a young person gives

evidence of having been very popular in high school or college, it does not mean necessarily that his attitudes will transfer and bring him the same popularity on the job There is some hope of it, but no certainty. If, when working with one boss, an employee was found loyal and straightforward, there is no guaranty that he will transfer those attitudes when he changes bosses. In such situations the interviewer must get all the evidence possible, and use the best judgment he can develop. There is no clearcut rule to follow. Emotional adjustments transfer to a considerable extent, but not universally.

Skills.—The transfer of skills is limited rather closely to the identical elements in the two skills. In sports, for instance, there is running in baseball, basketball, and football. So far as one runs in one of these games, then, it would be helpful to have built up that skill in one or more of the other games.

If the transferable element is to be of help, that element should be of importance in the skill to which the transfer is made. Many individuals who have learned to play the piano take up typewriting and believe that the practice on the piano, limbering up their fingers, will speed up the learning of typewriting. But business-school teachers with a great deal of experience say that beginners on the typewriter who already play the piano have no particular advantage. The typist has much to learn beside finger dexterity; by the time the student learns the position of the letters, even the person who has had no experience playing the piano, will have developed finger dexterity. Here, even though there are some identical elements, they have not helped a great deal.

In skills it is usually conceded that the best thing for an individual to learn is precisely what he expects to do. The football player should learn football, not sprinting, as a means of becoming a successful football player. A mechanic is best at the particular kind of mechanical work he has learned to do, so far as there is a skill element involved. He will require some time to adjust to any new situation. It is well known that typists require some time to adjust, even in changing machines.

Therefore, in examining experience in skilled work, the interviewer will want to determine the identical elements in the skills presented with those in the job for which the applicant is being considered. The job dictionary, previously mentioned, will often help here. The Occupational Dictionary, it will be recalled, places jobs in families, depending upon their resemblances. Usually, in selecting skilled workers, the employment interviewer can get some additional help from the foreman. After he has screened the applicant, he may send him to the foreman and let him determine, right on the job, how much of the applicants previous skills can be quickly transferred to the new situation.

And so we find on the basis of various kinds of evidence that the employment interviewer cannot afford to be overwhelmed by the person who claims to have had more experience, and to be more competent, than the interviewer himself. Such individuals and such experience must be carefully examined. Perhaps the person did not learn. Perhaps the experience was good but does not apply. Perhaps the experience was good, and should be helpful, but the individual is unaware of the problem of transfer and expects to start right in telling everyone "how to do it." And finally, the applicant's story may all be true and he may be the very person that the company needs. The alert interviewer, here as elsewhere, must sift the evidence and come to a conclusion.

Chapter 12

DIRECTIVE AND NONDIRECTIVE
INTERVIEWING

Directive interviewing is that in which the interviewer directs the interviewee to answer specific questions: "Tell me your name, please." "Where did you work last?" "What was the first job you ever had?" "What did you do during the summer of 1942?" In nondirective interviewing the interviewer turns the subject matter of the interview over to the control of the interviewee. "Did you want to see me about something?" "What would you like to tell me today?" "Is there something you would like to explain?"

There are two problems involved in deciding which type of interviewing to do. One is an obvious problem of person-to-person relationships. If the interviewer is demanding, abrupt, and overbearing, he will "direct the interview" to its ruin. By his manner the interviewer can arouse a will-against-will situation in which his attempt to dominate stimulates a resistant attitude in the interviewee. But by treating the interviewee as a person, and by being considerate and friendly in his attitude, it is possible for an interviewer to do directive interviewing without arousing the opposition of his interviewee. It is to win this co-operation that so much emphasis is placed on treating the interviewee as a person.

The Problem of Orientation.—The greatest problem in directive versus nondirective interviewing is that of orientation; that is, each person's understanding the subject matter of the interview and his knowledge of where he is going in it. Let us illustrate the situation by an extreme case in which the interviewer directs the interviewee in telling of a certain situation, making use of directive interviewing at its worst.

INTERVIEWEE: A young man wanted to find a job. The boy's name was . . .

INTERVIEWER: Where did this happen?

INTERVIEWEE: In Connecticut. The boy's name was . . .

INTERVIEWER: In what part of Connecticut?

INTERVIEWEE: Near Bridgeport. His name was . . .

INTERVIEWER: Had the boy ever learned a trade?

INTERVIEWEE: No. His name . . .

INTERVIEWER: What was his father's occupation?

INTERVIEWEE: I don't know what the father did. The boy's name was . . .

INTERVIEWER: Did the boy have a college education?

INTERVIEWEE: I don't know. His name—but . . . never mind, I've forgotten it anyway.

This case is a little extreme, because the whole subject matter of the interview is in the mind of the interviewee. Consequently, it would be very hard for the interviewer to direct the telling of the incident without ruining it. Similar situations, however, do occur in personal adjustment counseling, when a person comes to an interviewer to tell his story and solve his problem.

The question of the directive versus nondirective approach is not new. In fact, it can be shown to be as old as society, by shifting the subject matter just a little. Religion and law have been primarily, but not entirely, directive. The Quaker meeting is nondirective, and the members sit in silence and wait for the spirit to move them to consider some topic. The usual preacher, however, is very directive: "Go to the ant thou sluggard; consider his ways and be wise." The judge also tends to be directive: "Mr. Jones; you are charged with driving your car while intoxicated. What have you to say for yourself?" But when witnesses are examined, both the directive and nondirective techniques are used. Cross-examination is directive, and the free narration of some incident is largely nondirective.

If either technique were always the best, experience would probably have so indicated before this, since both have been tested in practice. That both techniques are retained suggests

that the best procedure will depend upon the occasion and the subject matter.

A good many years ago, Sigmund Freud found that in the field of therapeutics, if you ask a patient directly what you want to know, he may not be able to answer you even if he is trying to co-operate fully because of some kind of internal blocking, or failure in orientation. As a result of this discovery, Freud developed a special questioning procedure that has become the core of psychoanalysis. The patient was directed to tell his "story," or anything that came into his mind since it was Freud's belief that all associations lead, sooner or later, to those incidents of a person's life which are the most important. In this technique of Freud's, thus far, we have a good example of what is termed "nondirective interviewing." But Freud found out, as he interviewed one person after another, that individuals would dilly-dally indefinitely rather than follow their associations to subjects or incidents they did not want to face. He had to push them on or direct them to examine a particular group of associations or ask them, in the next interview, "What was in your mind when you changed the subject yesterday?" or "Why did you dilly-dally so long on this topic without getting anyhere? Tell me more about that subject."

With World War II, therapeutic or "healing" interviewing designed to alleviate or cure physical ills generated by mental factors, became a very important service. The psychologists as well as the psychiatrists were working in the field by then, and methods were being examined from different points of view. Carl R. Rogers, a clinical psychologist who had worked primarily with young people, went one step beyond Freud and developed a completely nondirective approach to counseling.

With the publication of Rogers' work,[1] the problem of the interviewer's attitude and techniques in counseling and interviewing was brought out into the open forum and discussed at length. It was not long before nondirective techniques in interviewing were introduced into industry. The first instance

[1] See William U. Snyder, Carl R. Rogers and others (eds.), *Casebook of Non Directive Counseling* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Co., 1947).

was in the Western Electric experiments at the Hawthorne Plants where counseling was done from the nondirective view point Successes here led N A Moyer of the Bell Telephone Company of Pennsylvania to use nondirective techniques in employment interviewing

The question of directive as against nondirective techniques has developed to a point where it cannot be disregarded but needs a thorough examination Below are examples of various possible questions of both varieties which can be used, fol lowed by a more complete discussion of the different tech niques

1 Simple directive   Do this job next First disconnect the motor, then unbolt it and remove it, then take it apart and clean it'

2 Directive questioning   'It is necessary to find out if your abilities fit the job requirements Please tell me what you did on your last job"

3 Directive evaluation   'If you become an employee, our insurance and social security records require that we know your age You don t mind giving me that information, do you?'

4 Directive neutral   'I want to help you learn how to do this Have you ever used this machine before? No? Well I will explain its operation to you, and whenever you don't understand, just ask questions Is there any question you want to ask now?"

5 Nondirective directions   Although an apparent contradic tion of terms, this type is invoked when one says, 'The electric motor needs repairing If you feel that you should do it, you may use any method that seems desirable to you"

6 Nondirective questioning   'Good morning Have you something you would like to tell me?'

7 Nondirective evaluation   An interviewee says "I am not happy in my work any more, and it seems to me that a person ought to be happy in his work" The interviewer

responds: "I see. You are uncomfortable because you are not happy in your work."

As we consider these various techniques, we can imagine an interview in which all of them could be used advantageously and that it is hardly desirable to maintain consistency for its own sake. Techniques, like the tools in a workman's kit, are to be selected for the particular task to be done. We would expect an amateur to depend on one tool, the one he knew best how to use, but an expert we would certainly expect to use his whole kit, selecting the tool best fitted to the job. It may be that the interviewer will depend upon one technique more than on the others, but he should know how to use them all.

In order to learn how to use the interview methods that have been identified above, it will be profitable to examine them in greater detail. We will consider each in terms of: (1) the attitude adopted by the interviewer, (2) the assumptions made, (3) the consequences to be expected, and (4) the occasions for its use.

Simple Directive.—The attitude of the interviewer in giving simple directions is the "I know it, and you don't" attitude. Giving directions in this way does not necessarily imply any discourtesy or undue abruptness. One story has it that Owen D. Young, as an executive, never gave a direct order in his life, but that he did give simple directions often. He merely phrased his directions diplomatically. "If you don't mind, disconnect the motor first. You'll find it easier to unbolt it then and can take it apart and clean it." The interviewer, in giving simple directions, assumes that the interviewee can and will conform to his wishes and that this is the most desirable outcome of the interview.

In terms of "psychological climate" and interviewee reaction, the consequences of giving directions in this way depend upon the situation. In cases where the interviewee would naturally want to submit, the consequences should be good. If the interviewee does not know how to do the job himself, if he is hesitant about taking responsibility in a situation, or

if he has no other purpose at the time but to please the interviewer, he will probably respond favorably to receiving specific directions. If, on the other hand, the interviewee does know how to do the job and, perhaps, has started it, or likes to do things his own way, such specific directions may be very annoying. Cason[2] in his study of common annoyances found that one of the most annoying things was "to be told to do a thing when I am just about to do it."

The best situations in which to use simple directions are obviously those where the interviewee feels incompetent to go ahead and will welcome the aid of directions. The interviewer must be careful, however, in judging the interviewee as incompetent for a particular task.

Directive Questioning.—The attitude in directive questioning is, in effect, "I must know the answer to this question, and I would like it, please, right now." Although the interviewer asks a question of the other person, there is an imperative in his point of view. In essence, he implies, "We both have a living to make, and this takes considerable time, so let's get down to business." The underlying assumption here is that the interviewee can give the needed information or refer the interviewer to sources where the answer can be obtained, or that he can report that he has forgotten and so allow the interview to proceed to other business.

The consequences of directive questioning will depend, of course, upon the occasion and the particular questions asked. In therapeutic situations, as we have found, direct questions are often futile. A person often does not know why he is "blue" or why he feels a compulsive necessity to run away or why he feels very guilty about having done something (he doesn't know just what). To continue to ask direct questions when the interviewee cannot answer them is more than futile; it drives the interviewee away, just as would an examination that he felt sure of failing. Directive questions can also be unsuitable because of the particular question or because of

---

[2] Hulsey Cason, *Common Annoyances* (Princeton: Psychological Review Co., 1913), pp. 32-62.

the time at which it is asked in an interview. For example, "How long has it been since you told a lie?" Approached diplomatically, most people will admit that they cannot put themselves into the same category as young George Washington, who "never told a lie"; yet they will still react unfavorably to the blunt question.

There would seem to be many situations where direct questioning is the most desirable technique. When a person is lost, there would seem to be little reason for "beating around the bush" and asking a passing stranger if there is anything he would like to say. In teaching, direct questioning is often necessary when a teacher must know if a student has mastered a step he must know before he can go on to the next one. In employment interviewing there are many bits of information that must be obtained by direct questioning. Even in "non-directive employment interviewing," as reported in the professional journals, there are reversions to direct questioning.

There is no reason to believe that the subconscious mind is always, or even usually, standing in the way of business operations. When a man is employed, he must give his attention to one task after another at the demands of the business rather than according to his own internal structure and inclination. Consequently, it would seem to save a good deal of time in business to go directly to the point with directive questions, at least until some obstruction is noticed. Yet there are occasions when nondirective questioning seems to give best results, as we shall find when we reach that topic.

Directive Evaluation.—The attitude of the interviewer in directive evaluation is, in effect, "I know what is right and wrong, good and bad, in this area. I will tell you." The assumptions are, of course, that there is a right and wrong to the matter, that the factors involved are all out on the table where they can be seen, and that simple, direct reasoning will bring everybody to the same conclusion.

The consequences of directive evaluation depend on two factors, both of which are equally important. One of these is the question of whether the evaluation is correct. The other

is whether the reasoning which determines the correctness of the evaluation has taken account of all the factors and can be followed. The field in which directive evaluation is least effective is probably that of therapeutic counseling. Here the subconscious mind stands in the way of permitting all the factors to reach the surface, where they can be examined and taken into account. As an example, let us say that the interviewer says to the interviewee, "Suppose we straighten this out by putting first things first. The love of your wife and the welfare of your children are obviously the things of greatest importance to you." Because of subconscious factors, the interviewee may be able neither to understand nor appreciate the value of the advice and the interview may be wasted. He may even feel anger at hearing the interviewer go over the matter so glibly, saying things that sound all right in general but somehow do not seem to apply to him. The reasoning isn't obvious. It doesn't satisfy. The interviewee may even be worse off than he was before because he has found that still another person—one from whom he expected better—has failed to understand him.

Directive evaluation is the task of the art critic, the preacher, and sometimes the foreman, when his function is that of a teacher. To be effective, however, the evaluations must be correct and all the factors must be properly accounted for. As this requirement frequently cannot be met in therapeutic counseling, it is often necessary, in dealing with the mentally disturbed, to wait for the discovery of hidden factors and, in the meantime, to allow the patient to express his own evaluations. In the employment interview, the interviewee may be encouraged to make his own evaluations merely to indicate what they are so that his mental make-up can be better understood.

Directive Neutral.—In the directive-neutral interview, the attitude of the interviewer is one of asking co-operation and offering to follow the lead of the interviewee at least half of the time. The assumption is that the matter dealt with be-

longs to both and can be best handled if both examine it and agree on mutual recommendations.

The consequences of the directive-neutral technique will depend on how well the two parties understand, not only the matter under consideration, but each other, and whether the two temperaments are of a kind that permit co-operation. If the two individuals are not equally informed or if they do not each have some particular insight into the problem, one or the other of them may be somewhat disappointed with the result.

In truly directive-neutral interviewing, both parties would be assumed to be exactly matched in their interests and abilities regarding the question in mind. The advantage of the method is a high degree of mutual understanding and co-operation, once agreement is reached, but there may be quite a long period of haggling and argument before the two parties can see eye to eye. The situations in which it would be best applied are those where both parties have equal responsibilities and equal interests. One such situation sometimes occurs in teaching. The teacher knows the subject matter, the material that must be covered, and which steps are elementary and which are advanced. The student, on the other hand, is the only one who knows whether the directions he hears are comprehensible and whether he has sufficient interest in the subject to make the effort of learning worthwhile. Both working together have the best opportunity of developing a successful technique.

Nondirective Directions

In so far as nondirective directions are a possibility, they indicate the attitude: "I don't know, and you do." The underlying assumption is that the interviewee is a specialist and the interviewer a petitioner. The consequences are, of course, that the interviewer puts his fate into the hands of the interviewee and hopes for the best. A situation where this frequently occurs is when an individual goes to a medical specialist. "Doctor, will you examine me and see if I need an operation? And, if I need the operation, will your perform it?"

Anyone going to a specialist finds himself in much the same situation. For example, a business man goes to a lawyer and says, "I have been charged with a breach of contract. Here are the facts. Do you think my case can be defended, and will you defend me?"

Nondirective Questioning.—Nondirective questioning and nondirective evaluation are the two tools of greatest importance in the nondirective technique. In fact, the nondirective technique was developed primarily around these two procedures.

In nondirective questioning the attitude is essentially, "You first, my dear Gaston." The interviewer says, in effect, "You know what is of interest to yourself and how your associations run. Lead me through the paths of association in your mind, and tell me what you see by the wayside. I will be interested in anything you can tell me. Anything you tell me, since it comes from the bypaths of your mind, will help interpret you to me and that's what I want." Underlying nondirective questioning is the assumption that the interviewee should retain full responsibility for himself. In an employment interview, the applicant must accept the responsibility for explaining his background and abilities and for fitting himself into an appropriate job or rejecting an unsuitable one. The interviewer encourages, accepts, recognizes, and clarifies statements of the interviewee, but he does not ask for any specific information. Neither does he give information or even try to direct the course of the conversation. In a therapeutic interview, the client or interviewee retains the responsibility for solving his own problems and for growing or groping out of his own difficulties in his own way. The interviewer asks the interviewee to express himself. He may then clarify what the interviewee tells him by restating it in new words, but he is always very careful to draw no conclusions. The questions below illustrate how this may be done in a business situation. The first are some beginning questions:

"Good morning. I notice you are applying for a clerical job."
"Sit down, won't you, and tell me about your problem."

"Have a seat. You wanted to talk to me?"

"Good morning. You have something to tell me?"

If the interviewee says only a word or two and then stops, the interviewer may say, "Instead of my asking you a lot of separate questions, it will save time for both of us if you'll just go ahead and tell me your whole story."

If the interviewee talks for a few sentences and then bogs down, the interviewer may make use of one of the following remarks:

"Go on, won't you?"

"Tell me more about it."

"What happened after that?"

"That's very interesting."

If the interviewee stalls and comes to a dead stop, the interviewer may repeat the substance of the last statement made by the interviewee. He should usually avoid using the same words, and should reflect the feeling-tone rather than merely the mental content. The interviewer should also be careful to reflect its proper depth, as well as tone. He will not want to make a great stir about something the interviewee thinks is trivial, nor will he want to make a shallow response to something which the interviewee seems to consider very important. For example:

INTERVIEWEE: I worked for a while in Seattle, but I got so tired of the constant rain that I quit my job and hit it for the South.

INTERVIEWER: You got so tired of the continual rain in Seattle that you finally gave up your work and went somewhere down South?

INTERVIEWEE: After that I got into debt and borrowed money. That was when I had the accident and broke my shoulder. Since then, things have been getting all mixed up. I can't see any way out. I feel beaten down and knocked out. I'd give up if somebody would tell me how I could.

INTERVIEWER: You've lost hope because of all your troubles? Now you feel very blue and depressed? You'd even like to give up if you could?

The consequence of this type of nondirective questioning, according to those who are most expert in its use, is that the subject is stimulated to talk more freely. As he finds that he is encouraged to talk about the subjects that are nearest to his interests, or which are bearing down on his mind, he often pours out his story in a torrent. And, as one idea in the mind is always associated with some other, he is lead from one disclosure to the next until all his mental "goods" have been spread out for display. The interviewer, state the partisans of this technique, will have obtained so much information about the interviewee that he will have a substantial understanding of him, even though he may not have received precisely the items he hoped for. In the next interview he will learn more and before long, the interviewee's personality will be an open book.

The field in which nondirective questioning is used most widely is therapeutic counseling. Here the difficulties met with are frequently so great that the interviewer does not really expect to find the interviewee's entire personality made simple and plain. He believes that he has done well if he has encouraged the interviewee to dig up some of his buried associations and examine them, or to look about a bit in some areas of his mind that have not been well explored. He is often successful, for experience indicates that in stimulating the sick person to bring ideas out of his mind and examine them in a new arrangement, he can help him cure himself.

Another situation in which nondirective questioning has been used, as we have already noted, is the employment interview. Upon examining reports of this application of the technique, we find that the following procedures are necessary preliminaries. First, a psychological examination is given to determine aptitudes, and a physical examination to determine physical condition. Home visits and checking of school and

other references are then completed to establish job qualification. The interview, therefore, can be reserved for discovering the interviewee's attitudes and general background. For this purpose, nondirective questioning seems to be very well adapted. There is no reason, we may remind ourselves, to hold with absolute consistency to nondirective questioning in any employment interview. We are told, however, that it is very difficult to go from a directive to a nondirective technique in the same interview but that the reverse is easy. In consequence, if an interviewer wishes to use both techniques he should begin with the nondirective and follow this until he feels that he has gotten from it all he can. Directive questions can then be used in the second part of the interview.

Nondirective Evaluation.—In nondirective evaluation the attitude of the interviewer is one of striving to understand the interviewee's values so well that he can reflect them back. A man knows what his face looks like, yet he is reassured and sometimes even instructed by looking in a good mirror. In the same way a person knows rather well what his values are. Yet, when an interviewer reflects them clothed in new words and perhaps stated a little more objectively than he has put them, he may gain a new insight.

In nondirective evaluation, it is assumed that a man's values grow out of his life just as branches grow out of a tree to maintain its balance and give it stability. Values impressed from without are like props under the branches of a tree; they may have some temporary value, but, if a strong wind comes from an unexpected quarter, they are likely to be blown down. In nondirective interviewing, too, it is assumed that a person's values often reflect subconscious experiences that have been long suppressed and forgotten. For this reason, they may not serve the present status of the person who owns them. A person, particularly a maladjusted person, may well profit by taking his values out and looking at them. It is assumed that, if he sufficiently examines his values against various backgrounds, he will modify them himself and so go on with a new and stronger internal balance.

The Choice of Technique

From the preceding discussion, we find that there is a great deal more to orienting the interviewee than was once considered under this heading. One reason for this is that sometimes the applicant, or employee, must be oriented in the firm's business. Sometimes he must be reoriented in his own experience. And sometimes the problem is one of integrating the employee's experience and attitude with that of other employees and the firm.

The interviewer has a variety of techniques at his disposal. Although some men will want to identify themselves primarily as directive or nondirective interviewers, there are others who will want to use these techniques as tools and apply the method that appears to be most helpful at the moment. In employment, promotion, transfer, and follow-up interviews, where the first assumption is that the interviewee is a well-adjusted person who needs further orientation in his work and in the policies of the firm, a major part of the interviews will be directive. However, even here, nondirective techniques can frequently come into play. In counseling, where the assumption is that the employee is disturbed over something and needs some reorientation within his own experience, nondirective techniques may be the principal ones used. But in this situation, again, there is no reason to be determined to do all the work with one technique. When common sense indicates, some directive techniques may occasionally be used. The expert interviewer will always want to select the best tool for a particular situation.

Chapter 13

THE PATTERNED OR GUIDED INTERVIEW

A patterned interview is one in which a little bit of the freedom of an unprepared, spontaneous employment interview, is traded for a little bit of organization and order. Some employment interviewers meet applicants and "let nature take its course," depending upon their own inclination to probe in the right places when the thought comes to them. Occasionally, they follow the order of the application blank, merely asking for more information on topics suggested there, and verifying the written data given. Some interviewers change the order in which they ask their questions with each different job description given them. In the patterned interview, a uniform procedure is followed that can be adapted to almost any job. Many companies favor this method since it is believed to save time and make the work of various interviewers more comparable. The interviewer, himself, finds the patterned interview helpful since it aids in the solution of three of his major problems, namely: (1) the problem of maintaining the orientation of the interviewee as he asks him a variety of questions, (2) the problem of communications which depends upon memory in asking the right questions and recalling the answers, and (3) the problem of making just decisions which require estimating different levels of qualification. Let us examine these in turn.

The Problem of Orientation.—Orientation, as we have found, is the arrangement of our ideas or mental associations in some order. The oriented person knows which is the introduction to his subject, which the conclusion, and which factor is cause and which is consequence. In directive interviewing, in which the interviewer asks the questions, he will find it

very difficult to maintain the orientation of his interviewee unless there is some logical order in his questions. Observe, in the questions below, how difficult it is to follow the first set of questions, and how easy to follow the second set:

DISORDERED QUESTIONS

"What work are you doing now?"

"Did you have any special home training as a child?"

"What job did you have before you took the present one?"

"What are you doing now in the way of continuing your education and training?"

"What was the first full time job you ever had?"

"What was your general educational background, at the time you began this training you have described here?"

ORDERED QUESTIONS

Work Experience:

"What work are you doing now?"

"What job did you have before the present one?"

"What was the first job you ever had?"

Educational Experience:

"What are you doing now in the way of continuing your education and training?"

"What was your general educational background, at the time you began this training you have described here?"

"Did you have any special home training as a child?"

Orientation is much easier to maintain if the interviewee can help maintain it. He will be able to do this if the questions are organized in such a way that he can see ahead a little way in the interview, and does not have to "wrench his mind" by pulling his thoughts from topic to topic without apparent reason. It will particularly help the interviewee to see ahead in the interview if the questions take a certain direction, as they do when a subject is treated historically: "What is the first thing that happened," "the second?" "the third?" This is the way a patterned interview is usually constructed.

The Influence of Memory on Communication.—The interviewer will have to exercise his memory constantly to carry on a successful interview. Within the interview, itself, he has two problems. One of these is to remember the job requirements and the questions that derive from them. The second is to remember the applicants' answers to the questions asked.

The interviewer must remember the questions that derive from the job requirements in order to be sure to ask *all* the essential questions. After the applicant has left, it is very difficult to obtain neglected bits of information regarding his experience or qualifications. One common pitfall the interviewer must guard against is following the lead of an expressive applicant so completely that he forgets to ask questions on some essential details. Carelessness, or any other aspect of a bad memory, can bring him to the same calamity—the interview over, the interviewee gone, and some essential information missing. Herein lies the reason why inexperienced, untrained interviewers often fail to get reliable results. They ask questions in a desultory, haphazard fashion and, at the end of the interview, have only one-sided, incomplete information on which to base their decisions.

But the problem is not solved merely by remembering the necessary questions. If several applicants are competing for the same job, the interviewer must remember to ask each question of every applicant in substantially the same way. It is very easy for a bit of suggestion to slip into the manner of asking some questions and thereby bias the answers. Consider these two questions: "Would you *mind* working overtime once in a while?" and "Would you *like* to work overtime once in a while?" If questions are unconsciously varied in essential ways when asked of competing applicants, a fair comparison of the responses becomes almost impossible.

The second memory problem within the interview—that of remembering the answers to the questions asked—is not as simple as it may first appear. We have all had the experience, when reading a book, of suddenly realizing we cannot recall a single word from the last three or four paragraphs. We were "wool gathering," we think a little sheepishly, as we read those

paragraphs over again. The interviewer, particularly when he works at his specialty all day long, can experience the same kind of wandering attention. In addition to this kind of memory lapse, he may also forget the precise details given by the applicant. Afterwards he may try to recall whether a particular applicant had five or nine years of experience at his trade; whether he *liked* very much to be with people all the time or *disliked* it. Research indicates that memory sometimes plays the trick of transposing opposites, a very unfortunate mistake in an interview.

Memory is not relieved of its responsibilities even when the interview is over. Particularly when there is more than one applicant, the interviewer will be expected to remember all the facts about each one clearly, without confusing the characteristics of the various individuals and without resorting to drill or repetition to fix them in his mind. If one of the applicants is employed, the interviewer will be expected to justify his choice by giving the facts on which his judgment rested. That means he will have to remember quite a little of the information obtained in the interview, get it down on paper, and add it to the completed application blank to start the employee's personnel record.

Solutions to the Memory Problem.—The patterned interview always helps to solve the memory problem, even though it permits two procedures. In the first procedure, everything deemed important is written down and the memory is relieved of its load by the presence of a written record. Here the pattern layout indicates where to write the information on various topics, and so leaves an orderly, easily analyzed record. In the second procedure the interviewer uses the pattern as a direct aid to his thinking and memory, depending upon a simple regular order and arrangement of data to aid his recall of required items.

When much writing is done, the interviewer must be careful to maintain the conversational tone of the interview. Reading and writing in an interview can easily triumph over friendliness. If the interviewer writes a great deal, then, he will find

it helpful to talk the matter over with the applicant, explaining the need for a record and asking his co-operation. "You don't mind if I write a good deal of this down, do you? You see, it is to your advantage to have all your answers correctly recorded so that no mistakes are made." Another precaution is to devise some method of recording data quickly so that the applicant can be observed while he is talking. Perhaps the interviewer can develop a shorthand system of some kind. He may, for example, devise symbols for job names and some of the more technical items that take considerable time to write out. He may prepare a rating scale to which he need add only special remarks and comments related to the uncommon factors in the applicant's personality.

A third precaution is to avoid marking indications of approval or disapproval in a form that the applicant will comprehend. It may be very disconcerting to the applicant to watch plus and minus marks put down on his record as the interview progresses, particularly if it happens that several minus marks follow one another. Therefore, if the interviewer is writing down the record, let him camouflage his signs of approval and disapproval. He may do so quite easily through the use of special symbols; a star, for instance, may indicate disapproval and a quotation mark, approval. The interviewer can easily devise such symbols to record what he must remember, yet indicate nothing to the person sitting across the desk.

The second procedure recognizes the fact that a meaningful or logical pattern always ties the incidentals together by giving them significance in filling out a picture. A little experiment will easily demonstrate the accuracy of this statement. Take individual pictures of such separate subjects as a horse, a bit of sky, a tree, a fence, a pond, a hen with chicks, a boy, a plow, a pile of rocks, a fishing rod, and a man. Put these into a box and then ask someone to take them out and look at them, one by one, putting them face down on the table after he has seen them. Now take away one of the pieces at random and ask your subject to re-examine the pictures and name the missing one. You can expect some lengthy consideration before he is able to identify it, if indeed he is able to do so at all.

Next show your subject a single picture made up of the same number of elements, but organized into a single unit. Here the man will be driving the horse as he plows along the fence near the tree, where the hen scratches in the newly turned earth to help her chicks find worms, and the boy sits on a pile of rocks by the pond, fishing. If you now take this picture from him and show him another one, identical in all respects except that one of the objects has been omitted, he will have little trouble identifying the missing part. The meaning and pattern of the picture hold the different parts of it in a relationship in the subject's mind so that he finds it easy to remember them.

Patterning (or organizing) the interview does not completely solve the memory problem; rather, it eases the memory load without removing entirely the need for observing and remembering the details. Patterning does not interfere with the interview itself anymore than a theme interferes with the telling of a story, or a steel framework interferes with the erection of a building. Such organization, if skilfully followed, is always an advantage. It need not prevent the interviewer from following cues offered by the applicant on one subject before asking questions on another. It need not interfere with a free flow of conversation. The pattern of the interview serves, like the composition of a picture, to hold the parts in place; it need not show to be useful.

The patterned interview aids in making just decisions. Sound and just decisions are partly a matter of attaining objectivity by avoiding prejudice, and partly a matter of clear thinking. The patterned interview gives some aid in both of these requirements. By subdividing a subject matter or a personality into its parts and considering these separately, some help is gained in escaping prejudice, which usually operates "whole hog or none," or in nicer language, by creating a "halo." Clear thinking is also supported by the classification of data permitting different aspects of a subject to be weighted and evaluated separately. Consequently a decision can be supported by more specific reasons, and in consequence of this, judgment can be checked and improved. Many patterned

interviews provide a rating scale with space for explanatory remarks near related judgments, and this also helps to clarify judgment.

The basic organization of almost all types of interviewing follows the idea that each interview should be planned according to its beginning, its middle, and its end, with special tasks for each division. In the beginning section of the interview, the applicant or interviewee is to be met, oriented into the situation, and made to feel at home. The main tasks are to build up a feeling of confidence, a friendly relationship, and a general understanding of what is going to be discussed. When the purposes of this introductory section have been accomplished, the next stage takes up the core of the interview, whatever it happens to be. It is at this point that many patterned interviews take over and arrange a procedure for asking the important questions which must be asked. After the business is finished, ending the interview on a pleasant note becomes the final task. Several minutes are sometimes required to release the tensions that have been built up. The interviewee's attention is to be redirected back to his own work and other obligations. No matter what happened in the interview, it is to be reviewed as merely an incident between friendly people. For many brief interviews, no other organization will be required than the division into beginning, middle, and ending. If the business of the interview is not very extended and does not need to be subdivided to be handled efficiently, there is no reason to break up the middle section into parts. The special tasks of the beginning and the ending of the interview, however, should never be overlooked, even when these three divisions are condensed and brief.

Uses of the Guided Interview

It will have been observed that a patterned interview, by its very nature, is a directive rather than a nondirective interview. Consequently, a firm must take this factor into consideration in any decision as to the kind of interview it wishes to use. In the patterned type we find an emphasis on logical

direction, time saving, and even measurement. In the non-directive, stress, and group interviews, considered in later pages, the emphasis is on obtaining full expression from the interviewee. If one can estimate trends in such matters, it would seem that at the present time in interviewing at the higher or supervisory level, the emphasis is on the fuller expression obtained by group interviews and nondirection, and on the more strictly guided interview for the "run-of-the-mill" and "lower" jobs.

Because of their directive nature, many patterned interviews have also the very valuable characteristic of standardization and score, which, when reliable, are significant aids in the evaluation of the interviewee. Validation of a guided interview is not the simple matter it is with a test such as the Terman-Binet test of general intelligence. The latter tests for only one reaction—the ability to react intelligently. The interview, on the other hand, encompasses a great number of factors contained in the peculiarities of the job, and the unique organization of the interviewee's personality. However, the difficulties of validating the guided interview must not be interpreted to mean that such validation is impossible. To the contrary, the data concerning validation presented with some of the patterned interviews considered later in this chapter, indicate that validation of the guided interview can be achieved.

Even without complete validation, however, much value can be gained from a guide. The intensive study that has gone into producing a guide has led to the establishing of areas of importance, so that the questions cover what experience indicates are all the important aspects of the average workman's life.

Another note of caution in the use of the guided interview must be mentioned here. It is possible to depend entirely upon a set of detailed questions only for interviewing an average man. Since no individual is the average man, any guide or pattern, if held to with too great rigidity, will be incomplete. For instance, one man had such a feeling of close identification with his father that he failed in business at the age of forty-five, just as his father had done. He then

recovered and re-established his credit at fifty, again in the same way his father had. Those who knew this man and his ideology saw him prepare for bankruptcy, bring it on by extravagance and carelessness, and seem to enjoy the accomplishment. Once bankrupt he went to work with perfect confidence that he would "pull out of it," as his father had. An experienced, alert interviewer would dig this information out even while using a guide, since a guide is not designed to prevent an interviewer from following important leads dropped by the interviewee. But a poorly trained, inexperienced interviewer, depending too heavily upon the fact that the guide is supposed to touch all important aspects of a person's life, might miss it by merely asking the questions written down.

The pattern must be broken in individual cases to examine the unique experiences and character formations of individualists and nonconformists. Consequently, precautions must be taken to avoid depending too heavily upon the scores obtained by some standard interviews. Such scores occasionally give an untrained person a feeling of considerable accuracy and finality. Yet, no one, anywhere, has been able to reduce personality to simple arithmetic, and it is not done in a guided interview. A little reflection will remind the interviewer that all he has done is to divide his judgment into many small decisions and then add them up. His final decision can be only as accurate, and as complete, as the summation of his separate small judgments. All of his errors have been added in as well as his separate correct insights. The use of the score in "average cases," we have seen, has the advantage of validation, of examining the diagnostic value of particular questions, of eliminating the poor ones, and preserving the good ones for use with average people. But it is doubtful if a patterned interview can ever, when strictly held to, have such a high predictive value that the interviewer will not occasionally want to use his over-all judgment in deciding that some specific experience in a particular person outweighs a good many of the usual items. Nearly every producer of a patterned interview places great emphasis on the experience and training of the interviewer.

The reliability of the scores based upon any type of guided or patterned interview must, of course, be established and validated from follow-up study of the interviewee after the interview. Scores must not be computed and followed blindly simply because the questions or pattern of the interview will theoretically elicit the necessary information. With validation, particular questions which do not "pay off" can be eliminated and unusually good questions recognized. A certain interviewer, for instance, may have the conviction that it is very important to know whether an individual went to parochial school or public school when he was young, and whether he obtained his first business experience working for "big" or "small" business. Without putting these questions in specific form and carefully examining the subsequent success or lack of it of the individuals who answer in one way or the other, the interviewer may retain a misconception all his life and assume that answers to certain questions are important when, in fact, they are noncommittal. It must be remembered that the validation is not complete until it is done for each particular job separately.

Another question that comes to the minds of many people as they look over a guided or patterned interview, is the degree to which they appear to wander from the job description to such areas as educational history, economic history, personal history, family history, and social history. Many people ask almost immediately what the word "history" means. Are these histories to be followed back into childhood—if not, just how far back? Is an interviewer in business ever justified in talking with a person about what happened when he was three years old?

The answer to these questions of the wide background coverage of the patterned interview has several facets. One is that most purveyors of patterned interviews recommend that psychological tests also be given and that all other sources of objective information, such as previous supervisors, be contacted. If the whole spirit of the plan is carried out, the patterned interview can be used primarily to examine a person's attitudes and subjective life, leaving his work skills to be de-

termined by more objective methods. In cases where the interview is depended upon entirely, a heavy emphasis must be placed upon work history and its relation to the job description.

A second answer to the criticism of the wide spread of questions in the patterned interview relates to the conviction, universally held today, that the mind is a dynamic whole with each part related in some way to every other part. It is impossible, for instance, to reach into a person's mind and pull out his ability to sell shoes and examine this by itself in any meaningful way. It makes too much difference whether a person wants to sell shoes, among other factors which are operating on his mind. A person never leaves his past behind, but only wraps it around with the present and keeps it inside him. The two illustrations below indicate the strength of off-the-job factors in influencing on-the-job behavior.

V. L. was an excellent workman but was getting drunk pretty regularly once a week. He had lost a number of jobs because of this trait. Then it was brought to light in an interview that he was greatly disturbed because his oldest, and favorite, son was incapacitated with asthma. It appeared that the boy's career was ruined before it could begin. The boy was sent to a famous clinic where he fortunately made a rapid recovery and was able to go to work. Meanwhile, the father, with no attention being given to him, recovered from the alcoholism at almost the same rate that his son recovered from the asthma.

An otherwise excellent foreman was failing because he could not give definite instructions or work directions. An interview indicated that in his sixth year he had become very angry with his father because his father had said, one day, that he had to go to work and could not take the boy skating. Enraged, the boy had said, "Well, go to work then, but I hope you get killed and never come back." By some chance the father had been killed that day, and the son, even when he was grown up, found himself unable to give any kind of directions to anyone without a very strong feeling of discomfort.

As a principle of interviewing it might be stated that on the average, the "prospecting will be richest" in discussing the subject matter for which the interview is held (a particular job for instance) and closely related matters. But there is a possibility of finding closely related and highly important matter anywhere in an individual's mind. In consequence, an interviewer should not blush if caught listening to someone tell of a sweetheart lost when he was four years old, or of any other incident of human experience. In a particular case, an experience of early childhood might be of much more importance than a discussion of the last job an applicant had held.

Patterned interviews, in general, tend to stay rather close to the present, but suggest in the word "history" that the interviewer can go as far back as he finds useful in a particular case. The interviewer's attention is directed here to some of the things to look for in these various "histories."

Personal history might indicate whether or not there are any trends in the person's life. Has he been developing or merely growing older? Has he shifted around a great deal or does he seem to be rather stable? To what extent has he been a "lone wolf," and where, and to what extent, has he joined forces with other people? How dynamic has he been? To what extent is he aware of personal goals and personal standards of work and conduct?

In family history the interviewer may find indications of how an individual gets along with those he lives with. Can he give and take suggestions? Are his living habits reasonably regular and his ethics acceptable to those who stand by? What responsibilities does the individual have and how seriously does he take those responsibilities?

The social history may indicate how well the individual has conformed to the customs and regulations of his society. Is he very social in nature and will he be called upon to meet all kinds of social obligations? Is he a "social climber," and is there a possibility he will want to play plant politics? Does he seem to believe that his family, nationality, club, and social group is a little superior?

Under educational history the interviewer may find signs of initiative and competitive success. Has all of his education been of the formal, academic kind, and was it all ordered by society or his family? Did he ever make any individual efforts to obtain training in any hobby? Has he learned any skills by himself? What was his academic achievement; did he find a place in the upper third of his class or the lower third? How does he feel about more education; does it mean anything to him? Does advancement mean any more to him than increased wages?

An individual's economic history might indicate financial reliability and competence. Has he managed to keep his wants within his means or, in case he has borrowed money, did he "rent" this money to good advantage and pay it back? Has he saved anything, and under his circumstances of responsibility can he get along satisfactorily on the salary of the job for which he is applying?

Before an interviewer turns to the work history—he will usually do this first of all as a means of establishing an orientation with his interviewee—he should have a clear idea of the job description of the particular job under question. Any work done by the applicant will provide useful information, but the interviewer must observe continually whether the jobs described in the work history are good preparation for the job under consideration. The work history should also indicate the person's attitude toward work. To paraphrase an old saying: Some people work to live, and some live to work.

We have now examined the general principles of the patterned interview sufficiently well to examine some examples in current practice. We may say in summary that the major tenet of the guided interview, to ask questions in some orderly continuing fashion, guided by certain themes or trends in a person's life, is basically sound and should be an advantage in every directed interview. The further matter of using certain specific questions and thereby standardizing the interview will probably depend more for its justification on the particular situation involved.

Types of Patterned Interview

Anderson's Guide for Interviewers.—In 1929 V. V. Anderson, Director of Medical Research for R. H. Macy & Co. in New York City, published a book[1] in which he recommended a "guide" for the employment interviewer. This guide classifies and itemizes the topics that are to be covered in examining an applicant during the interview. The subjects he proposed are:

A. *Personal History*
1. Developmental history
2. Health history
3. Educational history
4. Work history

B. *Personality Study*
1. Intellectual activities
2. Motor characteristics
3. Temperament
4. Self expression
5. Sociability

C. Home Problems
1. Family relationships

Data from a psychological examination were added to help in making a decision, and a small card for ratings and brief remarks recommended to record the interview. Anderson suggests that the interviewer begin the interview by examining the work history, but he gives no further instructions as to the order in which the questions should be asked. He depends a great deal upon the experience and insight of the interviewer, and suggests that every interviewer prepare for asking the questions dealing with personality by reading carefully in psychology and psychiatry. He does, however, present a plan, and an argument, for an orderly and systematic study of a person. Following the work of Anderson, quite a number of in-

[1] V. V. Anderson, *Psychiatry in Industry* (New York: Harper & Bros., 1929), chap. III.

dividuals have developed patterned interviews involving factors that require special consideration.

The Diagnostic Interviewer's Guide.—Probably the first interview guide in complete form offered to the public for use was the Diagnostic Interviewer's Guide copyrighted by E. F. Wonderlic and S. N. Stevens in 1935. The "pattern" is obtained by subdividing the person into "work history, family history, and personal history." The history aspect of this instrument, however, is more or less rudimentary. In using the Diagnostic Interviewer's Guide the interviewer is expected to memorize the instrument to the point where he can recognize all the questions at a glance and ask them accurately without delay in looking to find them or in reading them. He is expected to write down the answers as given, and when he finds it necessary to ask some question not on the blank, he writes both question and answer. Following each subdivision of the guide, such as the work history, the interviewer finds a series of evaluating questions which he is to ask of himself. "Does the individual show good team work?" "Has his history indicated the ability to work consistently?" "Does the work history indicate a capacity for growth?" The answers to each of these questions are noted by the interviewer with a plus or minus. When the interview is over, he adds up the plus and minus marks separately and derives an algebraic score. The instructions indicate that under ordinary circumstances the man should not be hired if he receives either a low positive or a minus score.

There is considerable blank space on the form for writing, and when this is not enough the interviewer is advised to add sheets of paper. The completed guide can form the beginning of the accepted applicant's personnel form.

In particular instances where the guide was validated against job success, it was shown to be a useful predictive device. The first and last pages of this guide appear in Fig. 2.

Emphasis on Past Performance.—Another well-known guide or patterned interview is that developed by Robert N. McMurry who emphasizes the slogan: "The best way to

DIAGNOSTIC INTERVIEWER'S GUIDE

NAME_____ DATE_____

ADDRESS_____ INTERVIEWER_____

The interviewer should begin each interview with this statement to himself "This applicant will impress me according to my past experience with persons who remind me of him. Consequently I must be on my guard against such prejudice which may naturally arise on account of this. I must keep a record of the fact and judge the applicant on the basis of the facts only The app icant is a blank to me now (Interviewer should write out information received n answers to the questions in the space left for that purpose). If given space is needed use separate sheets of paper. All of this material should be included with the blank filed when returned to the personnel department. The questions which are listed below for the interviewer to ask the applicant are suggestive. Other queries pertinent to the applicant's history will naturally suggest themselves to the interviewer as he restates the applicant.

Please read special instructions on last page before interviewing

WORK HISTORY

Interviewer says—

1. "Give me the names of your past employers. Begin with the last or present employer and go backward. Tell me
    (a) How you got the job.
    (b) What you did, and,
    ( ) Why you left.

2. How did your previous employers treat you?

3. What experience of value did you get from each job?

4. Did you do work of such quality that your employer would be glad to recommend you?

5. Were you ever criticized for the kind of work you did? Give me some examples of mistakes or failures.

6. Can you give me any example of success in your experience, particularly in handling peop e?

7. What kind of work did you enjoy the most and seem to progress the best in?—
    (a) Mechanical work?
    (b) Clerical and detail work?
    ( ) Contact work?
    or (d) Do you know?

When the interviewer has secured as much information as it is possible for him to get concerning every phase of the applicant's work history he should ask himself the following questions
    1. What kind of work history does the applicant have?
        (—) Poor — Fair Good — Excellent (+)
    2. Has it been the type of work which has required meeting and handling different types of people? (+) Yes No (—)
    3. Has the applicant indicated ability to work consistently? (+) Yes No (—)
    4. Has the applicant indicated a series and sincere attitude toward the work he has been doing? (+) Yes No (—)
    5. Has the work been such as to season him to the development of habits of persistence and aggressiveness? (+) Yes No (—)
    6. Has the work history indicated a capacity for growth? (+) Yes No (—)
    7. Does the work history reveal hab ts or att tudes wh ch w uld make it easy for the applicant to adjust himself to the policies and procedures of this camp ny? (+) Yes No (—)
    8. Is this man a good soldier as evidenced by good team-work? (+) Yes No (—)

FIG 2—Front and Back Pages of the Diagnostic Interviewer s Guide (E F Wonderlic)

PERSONAL HISTORY

Interviewer asks—

1. What do you consider your strongest qualities *and* characteristics?

2. From your own experience, what are your greatest weaknesses?

3. What ambitions do you have for yourself?

4. What caused you to apply here for a job?

5. What are you doing now to improve yourself and increase your efficiency?

6. Why should we give you a chance with us?

When the interviewer has secured as much information as possible concerning every phase of the applicant's personal history he should ask himself the following questions:

1. Does the applicant seem vitally eager to succeed? (+) Yes ⊟ No (—)
2. Does the applicant tend to have a sound estimation of his worth to the company? (+) Yes ⊟ No (—)
3. Can this applicant look you in the eye? (+) Yes ⊟ No (—)
4. Does he express himself clearly and forcibly? (+) Yes ⊟ No (—)
5. Does he seem to be frank? (+) Yes ⊟ No (—)
6. Can you visualize this man developing sufficiently to do the work you are doing? (+) Yes ⊟ No (—)
7. Does he have a well balanced personality? (+) Yes ⊟ No (—)
8. Does applicant give evidence of being aggressive? (+) Yes ⊟ No (—)
9. Do you believe this man can insist on his rights and still retain goodwill? (+) Yes ⊟ No (—)

SPECIAL INSTRUCTIONS

The interviewer must exercise care in the following ways:

1. He must write down in an orderly fashion as possible the applicant's answers to the questions asked.
2. Where interviewer asks a question not listed which seems to be of special importance, he should write it down in the margin or on a separate sheet.
3. The interviewer should answer the questions which he has to ask himself after he has concluded the process of gathering information concerning each particular area of the individual's history.
4. The positive and negative answers should be added separately. The difference between the two totals is the score for the interview.
5. Wherever factors other than those involved in the questions included in the guide are determining factors in the interviewer's decision, detailed statement concerning those factors should be made.
6. In general a negative score or a very positive score should eliminate the applicant from serious consideration.
7. A perfect positive score would be plus 34. A completely negative score minus 34. It is hardly possible that any applicant would make either of these two extremes.

Fic 2.—*Continued*

judge what a person will do in the future is to know what he has done in the past." His patterned interview examines all other data obtained from the applicant; from his application blank, tests, and telephone check of references, and so forth. Most of the questions asked are factual in an effort to learn what the person has done in the past.

McMurry gives a number of arguments for the use of his patterned interview which may be generalized in the support of any carefully worked out, recorded interview.[2] They are:

1. The interviewer works from definite job specifications.
2. The interviewer has a plan for his interview.
3. The interviewer has been trained.
4. Prior to the interview, the interviewer has checked with outside sources, and has all available information regarding the applicant.
5. The interviewer has a series of clinical concepts that help him in evaluating the information obtained.
6. The interviewer has been carefully selected for intelligence and emotional adjustment.

Of these concepts, the fifth requires further explanations. The clinical concepts which McMurry emphasizes are those of character, motivation, and emotional maturity. By "character" he has in mind the qualities sought out by questions like, "Is he stable? Does his record indicate he will stay on the job? Is he industrious; has he worked hard and conscientiously? Is he able to get along with other people?" Emotional maturity is indicated by the answers to the questions: "Has he accepted responsibility? Is he an alibi artist? Is he moody, suspicious, fanatical?" Motivation is gauged by posing the questions: "How badly does the applicant want or need the work? Is his wife employed; has he other sources of income? Are there financial troubles, ill health, other distractions?"

There are more questions in the McMurry patterned interview than it is anticipated will be asked of any particular

PATTERNED INTERVIEW FORM—EXECUTIVE POSITION

Date_____19____

Rating: [1] [2] [3] [4] Comments:
In making final rating, be sure to consider not only what the applicant can do but also his stability, industry, perseverance, loyalty, ability to get along with others, self-reliance, leadership, maturity, motivation, and domestic situation and health.

SUMMARY

Interviewer:_____ Job Considered for:_____

Name_____ Sex: ☐ M, ☐ F; Telephone No._____

Present address_____ City_____ State_____
                Is this a desirable neighborhood? Too high class? Too cheap?

Previous Address_____ City_____ State_____
                Is this a desirable neighborhood? Why did he move?

Date of birth_____ Age_____ What kind of a car do you own?_____ Age_____ Condition of car_____
                                 Will he be able to use his car if necessary?

Were you in the Armed Forces of the U. S. during World War II? Yes, branch_____ No, why exempt?_____
                                                                Is there anything undesirable here?

Are you subject to call?_____

Why are you applying for this position?_____
                        Is his underlying motive a desire for prestige, security, or earnings?

WORK EXPERIENCE. Cover all positions. This information is very important. Interviewer should record last position first. Every month since leaving school should be accounted for. Experience in Armed Forces should be covered as a job.

LAST OR PRESENT POSITION

Company_____ City_____ From_____19___ To_____19___
                                                 Do these dates check with his application?

How was job obtained?_____ Whom did you know there?_____
                     Has he shown self-reliance in getting his jobs?

Nature of work at start_____ Starting salary_____
                       Will his previous experience be helpful on this job?

Were promotions obtained or raises in pay received?_____ Has he made good work progress?_____

Nature of work at leaving_____ Salary at leaving_____
                         How much responsibility has he had?   Any indication of ambition?

Superior_____ Title_____ How was he to work with?_____
                                                   Did he get along with superiors?

Number of people you supervised_____ What supervisory problems?_____
                                                  Is he a leader?

Responsibility for policy formulation_____
                                     Has he had management responsibility?

To what extent could you use initiative and judgment?_____
                                                      Did he actively seek responsibility?

Fig. 3.—McMurry's Interview Form for an Executive Position. (The Dartnell Corp.)

applicant. The interviewer is expected to examine the qualifications required of an individual applicant, and to ask the particular questions he needs answered. The interviewer should follow the pattern without its being apparent and should be able to deviate in following leads without getting lost. MacMurry has developed several patterned interviews for different purposes. The first page of his form designed to aid interviewing for executive positions is reproduced in Fig. 3.

The Interview Guide of Fear and Jordan.—Another guided or patterned interview is that presented in the *Employee Evaluation Manual for Interviewers* by Fear and Jordan.[3] This is a training booklet keyed directly to the Employee Evaluation Form for Interviewers to be used in the interview. The authors state that they have combined a philosophy and a technique in the same package. "The philosophy points to the recognition of each applicant as a unique individual and the evaluation of the person as a whole in connection with his suitability for the job." The technique is an interview guide examining work experience, training, and personal history in the order given. A rating scale is an inherent part of the guide, though the greatest value in these ratings is said to be that each one must be supported, in the space allowed, by written explanations. The average time for the use of the guide is twenty-two minutes. Interviewers must be trained, but a good deal of flexibility is allowed in following the order of questions given in the Evaluation Form during the Interview. The first page of this form is reproduced in Fig. 4.

The Office of Strategic Service's Personal History Form.—During World War II, the OSS Assessment Staff, in selecting personnel, used a Personal History Form with marked success. A variety of other measures, such as tests, were applied in selection and this material was available for use in the interview, but the staff reported that the interview was the most important single factor in successful selection.[4] Items on the

[3] Richard A. Fear and Byron Jordan, *Employee Evaluation Manual for Interviewers* (New York: The Psychological Corp., 1943), p. 39.

[4] Office of Strategic Services, Assessment Staff, *Assessment of Men* (New York: Rinehart & Co., 1948), p. 113.

FIG. 4.—Fear and Jordan's Employee Evaluation Form. (The Psychological Corp.)

Personal History Form were selected first on theoretical grounds, and were further winnowed by the test of practice. Basic areas were covered such as "national and social background, socio-economic status, personalities and interests of the parents, interpersonal relations within the family, traumatic events and fixations of early childhood, educational influences and experiences at school, vocational history, military record, marital history, present interests, sentiments and preferences, and health, past and present." [5]

The personal history form was first filled out by the applicant in the same way that an application blank is usually filled out. The questions appeared on the left-hand page only, with plenty of room left for answers. When this filled-in form was used by the interviewer, he wrote his additional remarks on the right-hand page. The interviewer had an opportunity to study the remarks of his applicant before the interview began. A good deal of flexibility was allowed in the manner and order in which the questions were asked. The staff reports that "there was certainly no technique that yielded more that was relevant and significant than the hour and one-half spent in listening to a candidate talk about himself." [6]

The Benefits of Patterned Interviews.—An organized interview presents a variety of advantages. It helps in the orientation of the interviewee because the orderly pattern of the questions helps him understand what is going on and mentally prepare for some of the questions. It helps the interviewer to properly exhaust his question area by asking all the questions that should be asked and remembering or recording the answers.

By sectioning the examination of the personality into such factors as work history, educational history, social history and economic history, and by emphasizing the historical treatment —always beginning with the present and working back—the experienced interviewer may, if he wishes, develop his own pattern. It is not necessary to give scores or write down the

[5] *Ibid*, p 83.
[6] *Ibid*, p. 114.

answers as they are given to make use of the basic idea of pattern and logical arrangement.

Experience with the guided and patterned interviews presented has been favorable. It would appear that where such a technique is suitable it is to be recommended as an improvement of the basic methods of the interview.

Chapter 14

THE VALUE OF TESTS

The problems of justice, fair play, and accuracy which confront the interviewer are partly problems of his own nature. Some of the hindrances to objective justice lie within himself, in his own biases and prejudices. Some of the problem, however, results from the difficulty of knowing what is hidden within the personality of the interviewee.

Psychological tests help to lay bare the make-up of the interviewee. They are relatively new devices from the standpoint of science. The first tests appeared in 1900, but even though scientific workers have had less than a century to perfect them, very noticeable achievements have been made. Tests have reached a stage of comparatively wide business application, and the number of business houses using them is growing every day. Consequently, it becomes necessary to understand their value and purposes.

Since tests are used in the evaluation of people, many persons have thought of them as competitors of the interview. Some have even believed that as tests were improved, the use of the interview would diminish and many types of interview cease to be practiced. Time does not seem to justify this prediction. It would appear rather that tests and interviews supplement each other, and together provide a far better assessment of an individual than can be obtained by either instrument alone. This compatability of tests and interview is summarized by the lists below which enumerate the particular value of each of the two techniques.

Preferred Uses for the Interview

1. To reveal reasons why some men with high or low test scores, do not do work consonant with their ability.

2. To examine motivation.
3. To discover character trends and neurotic constitution.
4. To examine emotional stability and instability.
5. To find out what a person thinks he can do, says he can do, or remembers having done.
6. To estimate a man's future on the basis of what he has done in the past.
7. To determine the effect of one personality on another; to determine a person's social reactions and "dynamic personality."
8. To determine and explain personal attitudes, such as willingness to work overtime.
9. To examine a person's opinions and subjective life.
10. To determine what forces or influences are most important in his life.
11. To examine a person's maturity.
12. To aid a person in adjusting to life or in obtaining a better personal integration.
13. To examine dominance, energy, or persistence of the interviewee by an evaluation of how these qualities have been exhibited in his past.
14. To determine the over-all human impression a person makes.
15. To determine a person's ideology and guiding ideas.
16. To examine the peculiarities of a given individual.
17. To encourage, inform, and motivate.
18. To use "on the spot" to estimate certain measureable factors when restrictive space and particular time requirements forbid the use of tests.
19. To determine "what is going on" among employees.
20. To build good will.

Preferred Uses for Tests

1. To discover what a person can do; his speed and his power.
2. To determine what facts the person knows.
3. To cut through the over-all impression—the halo—and determine an individual's separate abilities, i.e., finger dexterity, speed in the use of numbers, knowledge of particular

kinds, intelligence. (All these can be measured better by test than by interview estimate.)

4. To establish an individual's competitive position by comparison to established standards. Tests provide specific scores which may be precisely compared. These definite scores represent a much bolder attempt to evaluate a person than does the interviewer's estimate, since the score indicates exactly how good or poor a person is in the tested function.

5. To obtain a scientific sampling of a person's abilities.

6. To rid the interviewer's judgment of the influences of subjective biases and prejudices.

7. To obtain quantitative predictions of a person's probable success, and to obtain evidence regarding his trainability, his potential usefulness. It is not usually possible to show brilliance on a beginner's routine job, nor can the interview separate very clearly aptitude (potential ability) from achievement. Tests can do this to some extent, and occasionally discover great natural abilities in an inexperienced workman. The new man so highlighted can be more closely observed than the average beginner, or sometimes be put immediately into training for responsible work. Again, when transfers are called for, records of employment tests will occasionally show who can be transferred with profit both to himself and to the firm.

8. To save time in obtaining careful estimates of a person's abilities; the examinee contributes more time, the firm and interviewer less.

9. To get human evaluation on an objective level. One great value of objectivity in this case is that experience can be accumulated. Interviewers may come and go, taking their experience and judgment with them, but the record of tests stays on forever. In using tests it is possible, in fact it is necessary, to record data and accumulate it. As time goes on, the usefulness of the tests can be determined. Account can be taken of the accuracy, indifference, or ambiguity of any particular test. Experience is always good or poor to the degree that it carries particular signs that

    can be identified as indicating the useful or wasteful. Experience with tests does just this and leaves records by which the firm can improve its selection of men as time goes on.

10. To save time through its accurate control and the consequent arrangements that can be made. Tests can be "used" in various lengths, from one 12-minute test to a thorough examination. Definite appointments can be made.

11. To make it clear to the applicant that "he has no one to blame but himself" if he fails. He alone is responsible for his test achievement.

12. To demonstrate to employees that they are being given careful unbiased attention.

13. To save money. Tests are relatively inexpensive.

14. To give applicants as equal an opportunity as possible. Tests, unlike interviewers, never have moods and never are hurried.

15. To screen new employees economically.

Let us assume that a firm has decided to begin using tests as an aid in employment, transfers, and promotions. What basic facts should be known, and what precautions should be taken?

Sampling.—Tests first of all should be recognized as samples of behavior. In the past, some interviewers have misused test items because they did not understand the requirements of a sample. One inexcusable misuse of test technique was the procedure of one interviewer to place himself, as if by accident, with a desk light shining in his eyes. The test was to see if the applicant noticed this and offered to shade the light or turn it. Another interviewer used an equally bad technique when he scattered some scraps of paper on the floor to see if the interviewee would pick them up and put them in a waste-paper basket. Still another would look his applicant directly in the eye, watching to see if the applicant looked down or away.

    The major difficulty with such practices is the fact that their users overlooked the point that a test calls for adequate

sampling of behavior. There is hardly any single item of behavior of any kind so significant that it can be used by itself as a sufficient sampling of an individual's character. If tests are used, they should include enough well-selected items to provide an adequate sample of an individual's behavior. This refers both to the number of items—the length of the test—and where they are taken from. Where the items are taken from refers to the purpose or kind of the test. For instance, if only an intelligence test has been given, it is similar to sampling only one corner of a box of apples. The examiner has no right to assume success or failure on most jobs from his sampling of intelligence alone. He will want to spread his sample to learn something of the emotional stability, quickness and dexterity, clerical ability, mechanical ability, or whatever it is that the job calls for.

Reliability.—With the general requirements of sampling in mind, we will want to inspect carefully the tests themselves. The two basic requirements of employment tests are that they be reliable and valid. Reliability is the requirement we demand of a scale on which we weigh ourselves. We expect that, if we get on and off a number of times in succession, we will weigh approximately the same each time. The reliability of tests cannot be determined in the same manner (by immediate retesting) because of the influence of memory factors, but other means have been devised for determining reliability. An unreliable test does not measure anything. It is, accurately speaking, not a test at all. The question of what is being measured brings in the question of validity.

Validity.—A rose by any other name, said Shakespeare, would smell as sweet. Yet we call this flower by name to identify it and to record opposite this name its special attributes and uses. With psychological tests it is easier to assign names than to determine what it is they actually measure. In one case, an examination designed by its author as a test of mechanical ability was found to be a much better test of clerical ability. Just because a test is called a "memory test" does not assure us that it actually measures memory; it may

be measuring the ability to concentrate or to follow directions. The matter of determining what a test actually measures is called determining its validity.

Both reliability and validity are usually determined by a statistical process called correlation, the process of comparing two groups of scores. Correlation results always run from 0.0 to ±1.0. Let us illustrate this by the example of a newspaper reporter who sets out to weigh himself on several different public scales in the expectation of finding material for a feature story in the discrepancies of the weights recorded. He goes from one place to another, weighing himself and carefully noting down the figure. He retraces his route and weighs himself again on the same machines. The smaller the agreement the reporter finds between the recorded weights on the outgoing and return trips, the closer the correlation comes to zero and, of course, the poorer the scales. The nearer to 1.0 the correlation is, the greater was the agreement found and the better the scales. A correlation of 1.0 would indicate that the reporter found the recorded weights to be precisely the same on each scale the both times he weighed himself. If the correlation was found to be −1.0 it would mean that the scale that gave the heaviest weight reading on the outgoing trip gave him the lightest reading on the return trip.

For an illustration of correlation applied to validity, let us ask if the measure of a persons' arm span (his reach with both arms extended) is a valid measure of his height. A little reflection will tell us that it is a fairly good measure, but not perfect, for tall persons in general have long arms and short people have short arms. Yet, few people are perfectly proportioned, so we would not expect to get a perfect correlation of 1.0. Having performed this experiment frequently in a course of testing, we can report that a correlation of approximately 0.87 is frequently found for this relationship. It then would be a reasonably valid procedure to select people for long arm span by measuring their height.

As another example of correlation applied to validity, let us seat a group of people in alphabetical order according to their last names and assign to each a seat number correspond-

sampling of behavior. There is hardly any single item of behavior of any kind so significant that it can be used by itself as a sufficient sampling of an individual's character. If tests are used, they should include enough well-selected items to provide an adequate sample of an individual's behavior. This refers both to the number of items—the length of the test—and where they are taken from. Where the items are taken from refers to the purpose or kind of the test. For instance, if only an intelligence test has been given, it is similar to sampling only one corner of a box of apples. The examiner has no right to assume success or failure on most jobs from his sampling of intelligence alone. He will want to spread his sample to learn something of the emotional stability, quickness and dexterity, clerical ability, mechanical ability, or whatever it is that the job calls for.

Reliability.—With the general requirements of sampling in mind, we will want to inspect carefully the tests themselves. The two basic requirements of employment tests are that they be reliable and valid. Reliability is the requirement we demand of a scale on which we weigh ourselves. We expect that, if we get on and off a number of times in succession, we will weigh approximately the same each time. The reliability of tests cannot be determined in the same manner (by immediate retesting) because of the influence of memory factors, but other means have been devised for determining reliability. An unreliable test does not measure anything. It is, accurately speaking, not a test at all. The question of what is being measured brings in the question of validity.

Validity.—A rose by any other name, said Shakespeare, would smell as sweet. Yet we call this flower by name to identify it and to record opposite this name its special attributes and uses. With psychological tests it is easier to assign names than to determine what it is they actually measure. In one case, an examination designed by its author as a test of mechanical ability was found to be a much better test of clerical ability. Just because a test is called a "memory test" does not assure us that it actually measures memory; it may

be measuring the ability to concentrate or to follow directions. The matter of determining what a test actually measures is called determining its validity.

Both reliability and validity are usually determined by a statistical process called correlation, the process of comparing two groups of scores. Correlation results always run from 0.0 to ±1.0. Let us illustrate this by the example of a newspaper reporter who sets out to weigh himself on several different public scales in the expectation of finding material for a feature story in the discrepancies of the weights recorded. He goes from one place to another, weighing himself and carefully noting down the figure. He retraces his route and weighs himself again on the same machines. The smaller the agreement the reporter finds between the recorded weights on the outgoing and return trips, the closer the correlation comes to to zero and, of course, the poorer the scales. The nearer to 1.0 the correlation is, the greater was the agreement found and the better the scales. A correlation of 1.0 would indicate that the the reporter found the recorded weights to be precisely the same on each scale the both times he weighed himself. If the correlation was found to be −1.0 it would mean that the scale that gave the heaviest weight reading on the outgoing trip gave him the lightest reading on the return trip.

For an illustration of correlation applied to validity, let us ask if the measure of a persons' arm span (his reach with both arms extended) is a valid measure of his height. A little reflection will tell us that it is a fairly good measure, but not perfect, for tall persons in general have long arms and short people have short arms. Yet, few people are perfectly proportioned, so we would not expect to get a perfect correlation of 1.0. Having performed this experiment frequently in a course of testing, we can report that a correlation of approximately 0.87 is frequently found for this relationship. It then would be a reasonably valid procedure to select people for long arm span by measuring their height.

As another example of correlation applied to validity, let us seat a group of people in alphabetical order according to their last names and assign to each a seat number correspond-

ing to his position in the row. Will their seat numbers rank
these individuals as to the order of their intelligence? It takes
little reflection to see that there is no relation between the two
factors, so the seat numbers are not a valid index. If we are
determined to prove the accuracy of this observation, we can
work out a correlation between the seat numbers and the
scores of the individuals in an intelligence test. We will find
a correlation of zero or a figure very close to it, and so will
recognize that it would not be valid to arrange people for
intelligence by the number of the seat they occupied.

The fact that a correlation of 0.87 may not always be found
in the first experiment above, nor zero in the second one, sug-
gests that correlations depend upon the number of people
involved, the accuracy of the measurements, and a variety of
incidental or chance factors. A measure of correlation is there-
fore more informative if it comes with it a statement of the
probable error of the work. A correlation of "0.87 ±0.12"
would indicate that in a particular experiment a correlation
of 0.87 was found but that the same correlation might not be
found if the same tests, or measures, were used in another
case. Correlations must always be taken with a "grain of salt,"
the size of the probable error showing how much "salt" to use.

In discussing correlations and reliability, we have not ex-
plained the methods of computing them. Such statistical
work requires considerable training and practice. For many
interviewers it will be enough to understand what correlation
means. Those who must actually do the work of deriving
them must have recourse to some good book on statistics or
study it formally in school.

Kinds of Tests

To begin with, tests may be divided into comparative or
measuring instruments and descriptive instruments. In a
strict sense, the descriptive tests are not tests at all; they are
usually classed with tests, however, because they are used in
much the same way.

Comparative Tests.—In comparative tests a person is given some problem to solve or some task to do. He is instructed to do it as quickly and perfectly as he can, and his work is compared with what others do. In some of these tests, speed is of major importance; in others, each question is more difficult than the preceding one, the person's score depending on how far through the test he can work. In still other tests, both speed and difficulty are factors.

To establish a measurement scale for such tests, the scores of individuals are related to norms. After the scale has been established, each individual taking the test is scored as "above average" or "below average." Usually, however, he is placed more precisely in his group—as, for instance, in the upper 10 per cent or in the seventy-fifth percentile, depending on his score. It is important that the group which an individual is compared with be logical competitors, for it would be misleading to compare an engineer with a layman in a technical test. The norms, or bases of comparison, must always be properly related to the person taking the test.

Group Versus Individual Tests.—Comparative tests are sometimes given to people individually and sometimes to groups. It is always more costly to give the tests individually because so much more time must be given by the examiner. Consequently, group tests are used in business whenever possible. Intelligence tests given in business are usually of the group type as are clerical and nearly all paper-and-pencil tests. Group tests of this kind were developed during World War I when the Terman-Binet Intelligence Test, which required as much as an hour and a half to give to one adult, was almost the only objective measure. The Army Alpha and Beta Tests for use with soldiers were among the first group examinations developed. Now there are many which can be given at a great saving in time and expense.

In manual tests, particularly where apparatus is called for, individual examinations have held their own in spite of extra expense. In some cases, manual tests may be given to two or three or four persons at a time in order to save time and

money. But, in many cases, the individual tests remain practical because the apparatus may be quite expensive or because a large space is required to store and administer the test. In addition, the fact that many tests require the constant attention of the examiner may make group testing impossible.

To give psychological tests, a person needs training. This is particularly true with the individual tests where, because the examiner is alone with the person being tested, his influence is greater and where he must observe and interpret activities as they progress. There are factors in all these tests, moreover, that are different from the usual school examinations and which must be understood if they are to be properly used. One of these factors is standardization. The comparative situation must be rigidly held to, and each person must be confronted with exactly the same task as are those he will be compared to. This means that the test itself must always remain the same and that it must be administered in precisely the same way each time, with instructions worded in the same way and with the same time limits accurately measured and closely watched. The tests selected must be neither too difficult nor too easy for the individuals being examined, and the sample of behavior must be adequate to indicate what the prospects will do on the job.

Aptitude and Achievement Tests.—Just as tests can be divided into group and individual tests, they can also be divided into aptitude and achievement tests. Aptitude tests are designed to measure a person's inherited talents without the addition of anything learned. When achievement tests are used and no attempt is made to separate inherited abilities from those learned, the question is merely, "What can this person do today?" It is impossible to make a clear-cut and absolute separation between inherited and learned abilities, but the distinction can be made loosely and partially.

Intelligence tests are not designed to indicate what a person knows, but, how quickly he can learn, and how difficult are the problems he can master. Intelligence tests, consequently, may be classed as aptitude tests. Arithmetic tests,

on the other hand, are achievement tests. An arithmetic test is not usually given to determine what a person can learn but how much arithmetic he can do at the time the test is given.

Achievement tests are usually easier to construct. All that is necessary is a good sample of some kind of work arranged into a test form. Reliability and validity measures are then used to determine whether a good selection of items has been made. Next, suitable norms are set up to serve as a basis for comparative scores, and the test is ready for use.

A pure aptitude test is very difficult to construct because it would have to be made of problems that were entirely new and which were to be solved in completely novel ways. Even reading and writing would have to be eliminated since these have been learned. There are some dexterity and manual tests that approach this standard, but most aptitude tests are compromises. In intelligence tests, for instance, it is usually assumed that every normal person has had a chance to learn to read and write, so reading and a little writing or marking can be called for in a test without giving an advantage to the more educated person. This assumption is, of course, only partially true.

Aptitude tests, though very difficult to construct, are of great value. They indicate whether or not individuals are good promotional material. This is, of course, learned in time under the normal processes of carrying on a business, but it may take a long time. Most beginning jobs are largely routine and do not allow for a demonstration of much ability even though the person involved be as talented as the president of the firm. The use of aptitude tests has often put the spotlight on beginners who have potential abilities equal to those of high executives. This does not mean that the beginner would pass achievement examinations with a score equal to that of an executive, nor that he could do equally difficult tasks today. But it does mean that the beginner is a good prospect for future promotion.

Aptitude tests also give valuable information that is helpful when transfers are called for. A job well done indicates only that the doer is able to do that job well. But aptitude tests

indicate the other jobs he can learn to do, both at the same level of difficulty in other kinds of work and in advanced positions.

Descriptive Tests.—These instruments are the questionnaires for determining interests, attitudes, mental health, and personality, as well as the so-called projective devices. A sharp warning must be sounded in regard to the use of all descriptive tests since it is possible for anyone in "describing himself" to give a description biased somewhat in the direction of the ideal. In answering the questions presented to him the individual may give what he considers the best answer, instead of the true answer. This tendency is most marked when one is applying for work. If an individual is highly motivated to get a job, it would require the fortitude of a saint to admit that he is "often embarrassed in company," that he "frequently walks a block out of his way to avoid meeting somebody," that he "sees spots before his eyes" and similar damaging information, when he might as well give more favorable answers. This difficulty is not so important in the use of these instruments by the employee counselor. It would be useless for someone to come and ask for advice or help and then give misleading answers as to why he came. One does not go to a doctor with a troublesome pain, and to the doctor's question, "What seems to be wrong?" answer: "Nothing at all. I never felt better in my life."

Interest Questionnaires.—A basic assumption made in most interest questionnaires is that amateurs do not know what work professionals actually do. So it is misleading to ask a boy if he wants to become a personnel manager. He may answer "yes" because he thinks personnel managers earn much money or "no" because he thinks personnel managers must discharge people and therefore hurt them. But, so the assumption continues, the boy will know everything in which he is interested, and the personnel manager will know everything in which he, himself, is interested. In the case of one interest questionnaire, the Strong Interest Blank (see Fig. 5 below), which was tested with unusual thoroughness, the question-

Group............   Key number............

VOCATIONAL INTEREST BLANK FOR MEN (Revised)

By EDWARD K. STRONG, JR.
Professor of Psychology, Stanford University

Published by STANFORD UNIVERSITY PRESS, Stanford University, California

It is possible with a fair degree of accuracy to determine by this test whether one would like certain occupations or not. The test is not one of intelligence or school work. It measures the extent to which one's interests agree or disagree with those of successful men in a given occupation.

Your responses will, of course, be held strictly confidential.

Part IV. Activities. Indicate your interests as in Part I.

166 Repairing a clock............	L	I	D		196 Interviewing men for a job......	L	I	D
187 Adjusting a carburetor.........	L	I	D		197 Interviewing prospects in selling...	L	I	D
188 Repairing electrical wiring......	L	I	D		198 Interviewing clients............	L	I	D
189 Cabinetmaking	L	I	D		199 Making a speech..............	L	I	D
190 Operating machinery	L	I	D		200 Organizing a play	L	I	D
191 Handling horses	L	I	D		201 Opening conversation with a stranger	L	I	D
192 Giving "first aid" assistance....	L	I	D		202 Teaching children	L	I	D
193 Raising flowers and vegetables....	L	I	D		203 Teaching adults	L	I	D
194 Decorating a room with flowers...	L	I	D		204 Calling friends by nickname......	L	I	D
195 Arguments	L	I	D		205 Being called by a nickname......	L	I	D

FIG. 5.—Excerpts from Strong's Vocational Interest Blank. (Reprinted from Vocational Interest Blank for Men, by Edward K. Strong, Jr., with permission of the author and the publisher, Stanford University Press.)

Part VI. Order of Preference of Activities. Indicate which three of the following ten activities you would enjoy most by checking (√) opposite them in column 1; also indicate which three you would enjoy least by checking opposite them in column 3. Check the remaining four activities in column 2.

	1	2	3	
281	( )	( )	( )	Develop the theory of operation of a new machine, e.g., auto
282	( )	( )	( )	Operate (manipulate) the new machine
283	( )	( )	( )	Discover an improvement in the design of the machine
284	( )	( )	( )	Determine the cost of operation of the machine
285	( )	( )	( )	Supervise the manufacture of the machine
286	( )	( )	( )	Create a new artistic effect, i.e., improve the beauty of the auto
287	( )	( )	( )	Sell the machine
288	( )	( )	( )	Prepare the advertising for the machine
289	( )	( )	( )	Teach others the use of the machine
290	( )	( )	( )	Interest the public in the machine through public addresses

Indicate in the same way what you consider are the three most important factors affecting your work; also the three least important factors. Check the remaining four items in column 2. Be sure you have marked three items under 1, three items under 3, and four items under 2.

	1	2	3	
291	( )	( )	( )	Salary received for work
292	( )	( )	( )	Steadiness and permanence of work
293	( )	( )	( )	Opportunity for promotion
294	( )	( )	( )	Courteous treatment from superiors
295	( )	( )	( )	Opportunity to make use of all one's knowledge and experience
296	( )	( )	( )	Opportunity to ask questions and to consult about difficulties
297	( )	( )	( )	Opportunity to understand just how one's superior expects work to be done
298	( )	( )	( )	Certainty one's work will be judged by fair standards
299	( )	( )	( )	Freedom in working out one's own methods of doing the work
300	( )	( )	( )	Co-workers—congenial, competent, and adequate in number

Fig. 5.—Continued.

Part VIII. Rating of Present Abilities and Characteristics. Indicate below what kind of a person you are right now and what you have done. Check in the *first* column ("Yes") if the item really describes you, in the *third* column ("No") if the item does not describe you, and in the *second* column (?) if you are not sure. (Be frank in pointing out your weak points, for selection of a vocation must be made in terms of them as well as your strong points.)

	YES	?	NO
361 Usually start activities of my group....................	( )	( )	( )
362 Usually drive myself steadily (do not work by fits and starts)	( )	( )	( )
363 Win friends easily..........................	( )	( )	( )
364 Usually get other people to do what I want done........	( )	( )	( )
365 Usually liven up the group on a dull day...............	( )	( )	( )
366 Am quite sure of myself.......................	( )	( )	( )
367 Accept just criticism without getting sore...........	( )	( )	( )
368 Have mechanical ingenuity (inventiveness)	( )	( )	( )
369 Have more than my share of novel ideas.............	( )	( )	( )
370 Can carry out plans assigned by other people..........	( )	( )	( )
371 Can discriminate between more or less important matters.....	( )	( )	( )
372 Am inclined to keep silent (reticent) in confidential and semi-confidential affairs....	( )	( )	( )
373 Am always on time with my work................	( )	( )	( )
374 Remember faces, names, and incidents better than the average person	( )	( )	( )
375 Can correct others without giving offense...........	( )	( )	( )
376 Able to meet emergencies quickly and effectively........	( )	( )	( )
377 Get "rattled" easily........................	( )	( )	( )
378 Can write a concise, well-organized report...........	( )	( )	( )
379 Have good judgment in appraising values...........	( )	( )	( )
380 Plan my work in detail......................	( )	( )	( )
381 Follow up subordinates effectively...............	( )	( )	( )
382 Put drive into the organization.................	( )	( )	( )
383 Stimulate the ambition of my associates............	( )	( )	( )
384 Show firmness without being easy...............	( )	( )	( )
385 Win confidence and loyalty...................	( )	( )	( )

FIG. 5.—Continued.

naires were given first to personnel managers (and to many
other types of workers) to determine the interests typical of
the particular group. Now the questionnaires can be used on
anyone. An agreement of interests between any individual
and any group of workers or professional men indicates a con-
geniality with that group and probable success in that kind
of work.

Personality and Health Questionnaires.—These had their
inception in World War I as a device originated by R. S.
Woodworth to screen out draftees who would be liable to
develop shell shock. Dr. Woodworth assumed that the pros-
pective shell shock victims were to be found among those
classified as neurotics. He made a long list of questions, such
as, "Do you often have headaches?" "Do you see spots before
your eyes?" "Was your childhood unhappy?" These ques-
tions were tried out on both healthy people and neurotics
until the particular questions that most sharply differentiated
between the two groups were found.

Personality inventories are made in much the same way as
the health questionnaires. The particular characteristics to
be investigated, such as introversion or aggressiveness, are
determined. Then a large number of questions are found that
differentiate between the average person and the aggressive or
introverted. These questions are treated like those used in
the comparative tests except that the question of difficulty or
speed does not enter. The reliability and the validity of the
inventory, however, must be known.

Attitude Questionnaires.—These are much like the person-
ality questionnaires except that the questions of which they
consist are often put in rank order as they relate to some situ-
ation, company, union, or activity, as in the illustration con-
cerning attitudes toward fishing, given below.

Check at the left the statement that most accurately
represents your feeling.

1. I would rather go fishing than eat.
2. Fishing is my favorite recreation.

   3. I am always ready to go fishing in nice weather.

   4. I'll go if the weather is good and my friends go, too.

   5. There is some fun in fishing, but I prefer other hobbies.

   6. I don't care for fishing.

   7. I hate fishing.

   8. I would rather eat the bait myself than try to catch fish
      with it.

The questions or statements are put in a variety of forms, and there may be as many as 100 questions. Occasionally the questions are keyed and their proper order camouflaged so that the person filling out the questionnaire does not know precisely what is being investigated.

It will be asked that since the questions in the interest questionnaires and personality schedules could very well be presented in the interview itself, why use these paper-and-pencil inventories? The saving of time is a major factor, although additional benefits also accrue by eliminating the bias of the interviewer's personality and in obtaining a definite score. Then, too, the questions in the inventory are selected only after a great deal of research and are presented to each examinee in exactly the same way. The paper-and-pencil tests can be used in addition to the interview with great advantage. Questions already answered on paper give clues that the interviewer can follow up. The test scores set before an interviewer the probable attitudes, interests, and personality characteristics which he can investigate further.

Projective Techniques.—These are noncompetitive in nature and usually require the individual method. In addition, their use requires a good deal of special training on the part of the examiner. Even among professional psychologists only a limited number are adequately trained today in the special field of projective methods. It is preferable for a business firm either to get specially trained people to use these instruments or avoid using them. Projective testing is comparatively expensive and, so far, not widely used in business. Recently, however, projective techniques have been applied

in the selection of executives and supervisors, so it is necessary to understand their nature.

The famous Rorschach is the most widely used of the projective instruments. This device consists of a series of ink blots printed in various colors. These blots are shown to the individual taking the test, and he is merely told to describe what he sees. As there is nothing there to see but meaningless ink blots, all that the individual does "see" and all the meanings he derives come out of his own experience or are projected from his own mind. Some people examine the details of the blots, some the general patterns. Some notice the colors, some are entirely occupied with the shapes and contours. Some see pleasant pictures, some see depressing scenes —all in the simple ink blots. These various responses have been examined, classified, and explained in terms of the personalities that produce them.

Another popular projective instrument is called the Thematic Apperception Test. Here pictures are shown, and the individual being examined is told to create some story which the picture will illustrate. These stories are projections of the subject's own mental life and, consequently, reveal something of his nature.

Using Tests As Interview Aids

When psychological tests are used to improve employment selection, they should always be given before the interview, and the results made available to the interviewer. The test results may be of great value in conducting the interview. Suppose, for instance, that test sources indicate considerable dexterity and mechanical aptitude but no interest in mechanical activities—or a high order of intelligence but no educational achievement. Inconsistencies are placed before the interviewer that must be investigated before the personality can be understood. On other occasions all the test results will support the individual's application and give the interviewer added assurance, as when, for instance, high scores in extro-

version, aggressiveness, and vocabulary are found for a prospective salesman.

A questionnaire with a "best answer" that can be selected by almost anyone who wishes to disregard honesty, should never be used at the time of employment according to most psychologists. There is considerable motivation at that time to give the "best answer" for the sake of getting the job. All agree that the best time to use such questionnaires is when the employee feels secure in his position and believes that an attempt is being made to help him. Yet some firms do use personality questionnaires at the time of employment and maintain that they have statistical results to prove their value for employment purposes. A conservative solution to this problem would be to administer the inventories before the interview and use the results to provide cues and suggestions for the interviewer. Many useful cues appear in these inventories, as when a person answers "no" to the question, "Have you always had a fair deal?"

We have examined tests in the light of their construction and nature. Let us look at them now from the point of view of their business uses. By "dividing up" the human being as we did in matching him to the job, the task of selecting tests will be simplified. This division was: (1) physical factors, (2) mental factors, (3) emotions and interests, (4) sociability, (5) influence of the environment, and (6) need for supervision.

Tests of Physical Factors.—There are quite a number of physical abilities that might be examined, depending upon the nature of the work. Vision, hearing, balance, quickness of reaction, hand dexterity of the aptitude type (as placing pins in holes), hand dexterity of the learned type (as using common tools), and strength may be measured. There are many tests for such measurements, but no particular tests will be recommended in this book because, as stated elsewhere, tests should be given by a trained person who understands their weaknesses and the possibilities of misinterpreting the results. Such a person will usually know where to get the tests he

wants to use. There are quite a number of consulting firms available for this work throughout the country.[1]

It is obvious that tests in the physical area can bring out information that the interviewer cannot determine. The question of hand dexterity is an example. The interviewer can usually find out something about hand dexterity by questions which determine what hand skills the individual knows, whether he is good at tying knots, whether he likes to make things, and so forth. Even with such questions, however, the best the interviewer can do is to differentiate between extremes and separate the awkward from the manually clever. Tests, on the other hand, will give a much more definite indication of what this person's dexterity is as contrasted to others.

The tests below, illustrate some of the measurements frequently made:

1. The *Small Parts Dexterity Test*, devised by John and Dorothea M. Crawford, measures dexterity in the use of forceps and tweezers, with screwdriver, and with fingers alone. Eye-hand coordination and space perception are also involved. It is suggested in the test manual that the test will be found to have validity for such jobs as "wiring intricate devices, radio tube manufacture, fine inspection work, and assembly and adjustment of meters, clocks, watches, typewriters, office machines and other instruments."

2. The *Hand-Tool Dexterity Test* of George K. Bennett indicates proficiency in the use of ordinary mechanic's tools. The applicant uses a screwdriver and wrenches in removing and replacing a series of different sized bolts. The test is timed in seconds and norms for male factory workers are provided.

3. The *Minnesota Rate of Manipulation Test* consists of circular blocks of wood about two inches in diameter to be fitted into holes just slightly larger. In some cases the blocks are turned over as they are put into the holes, requiring the

[1] Catalogs of tests and information can be obtained from the Psychological Corporation in New York.

examinee to turn his wrist. The test measures speed of hand, arm, and wrist movements.

Tests of Mental Factors.—Mental factors are involved in most of the things we do, and they are reflected in the great variety of tests that could be catalogued here. Let us examine a few.

The Revised Minnesota Paper Form Board, the front and back pages of which are reproduced in Fig. 6, is a test to measure a person's ability to think in terms of diagrams and forms, an ability needed in all mechanical and engineering work. It was once believed that elaborate apparatus would be needed to measure mechanical ability. Experience has shown, however, that this ability is partly in the mind and partly in the fingers. The part that is in the mind can be measured as well with paper-and-pencil tests as it can by elaborate equipment. Hence such tests as the Paper Form Board, just mentioned, and the Mechanical Comprehension Tests (reproduced, in part, in Fig. 7) of George Bennett, Dinah Fry, and William Owens, were developed. The Mechanical Comprehension Tests measure a person's ability to understand mechanical relationships. They consist of drawings of gears, pulleys, screws, and other mechanical contrivances, together with questions on how these would operate under certain circumstances. By adding hand and finger dexterity tests to these paper-and-pencil mechanical aptitude tests, considerable information can be obtained about a person's total mechanical ability.

Clerical, stenographic, and typing tests might also be classed as mental, even though they include a speed and skill factor. Both aptitude and achievement tests are available for prospective clerks and stenographers. The achievement tests are constructed of work samples. Aptitude for clerical work is measured by such tasks as speed and accuracy in checking (see Fig. 8) and, for stenographic work, by a test in learning symbols.

There is a great collection of achievement tests available for the different types of mental work. Arithmetic, algebra, English, and general cultural background can all be measured

☐ ☐☐
Score   Percentile   Norms Used

SERIES AA

REVISED MINNESOTA PAPER FORM BOARD TEST
Prepared by R. Likert and Wm. H. Quasha

Fill in the blanks below (name, age, etc.)

BUT DO NOT TURN OVER OR OPEN THE BOOKLET UNTIL THE SIGNAL IS GIVEN

PRINT WITH CAPITAL LETTERS

Name _____
(Last)   (First)   (Middle)

School or Institution _____

Today's Date _____
(Month)   (Day)   (Year)

Instructor's or Foreman's Name _____

Age Last Birthday _____ Sex _____

Date of Birth _____
(Month)   (Day)   (Year in which you were born)

Grade I Am Now In Grammar School 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 High School 1 2 3 4 College 1 2 3 4 5 6 7
(Put a circle around the grade you are now in)

Or Department _____

_____

_____

DO NOT TURN OVER OR OPEN THE BOOKLET UNTIL THE SIGNAL IS GIVEN

The parts in most of the problems are taken from the Minnesota Paper Form Board Tests which appear in Paterson, Donald G.; Elliott, Richard M.; Anderson, L. Dewey Toops, Herbert A.; and Heidbreder, Edna., "Minnesota Mechanical Ability Tests," University of Minnesota Press, pages 94-101. Used by permission.

Copyright 1941 by Rensis Likert and Wm. H. Quasha.

Published by
THE PSYCHOLOGICAL CORPORATION

FIG. 6—Front and Back Pages of the Revised Minnesota Paper Form Board Test. (Rensis Likert and William H. Quasha.)

DIRECTIONS AND PRACTICE PROBLEMS

READ THE FOLLOWING DIRECTIONS VERY CAREFULLY WHILE THE EXAMINER READS THEM ALOUD

Look at the problems on the right side of this page. You will notice that there are eight of them, numbered from 1 to 8. Notice that the problems go DOWN the page.

First look at Problem 1. There are two parts in the upper left-hand corner. Now look at the five figures labelled A, B, C, D, E. You are to decide which figure shows how these parts can fit together. Let us first look at Figure A. You will notice that Figure A does not look like the parts in the upper left-hand would look when fitted together. Now do Figures B, C, or D. Figure E does look like the parts in the upper left-hand corner would look when fitted together, so E is PRINTED in the square above 1 at the top of the page.

Now look at Problem 2. Decide which figure is the correct answer. As you will notice, Figure A is the correct answer, so A is printed in the square above 2 at the top of the page.

The answer to Problem 3 is B, so B is printed in the square above 3 at the top of the page.

In Problem 4, D is the correct answer, so D is printed in the square above 4 at the top of the page.

Now do Problems 5, 6, 7, and 8.

PRINT the letter of the correct answer in the square above the number of the example at the top of the page.

DO THESE PROBLEMS NOW.

If your answers are not the same as those which *the examiner reads to you,* RAISE YOUR HAND.

DO NOT OPEN THE BOOKLET UNTIL YOU ARE TOLD TO DO SO.

Some of the problems on the inside of this booklet are more difficult than those which you have already done, but the idea is exactly the same. In each problem you are to decide which figure shows the parts correctly fitted together. Sometimes the parts have to be turned around, and sometimes they have to be turned over in order to make them fit. In the square above 1 *write the correct answer to Problem 1; in the square above* 2 *write the correct answer to Problem 2; and so on with the rest of the test. Start with Problem 1, and go DOWN the page. After you have finished one column, go right on with the next. Be careful not to go so fast that you make mistakes. Do not spend too much time on any one problem.*

PRINT WITH CAPITAL LETTERS ONLY.

MAKE THEM SO THAT ANYONE CAN READ THEM.

DO NOT OPEN THE BOOKLET BEFORE YOU ARE TOLD TO DO SO.

YOU WILL HAVE EXACTLY 20 MINUTES TO DO THE WHOLE TEST.
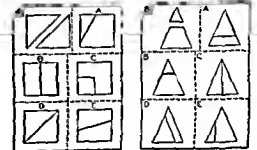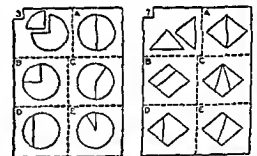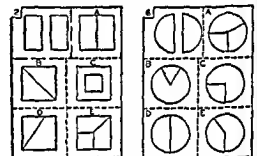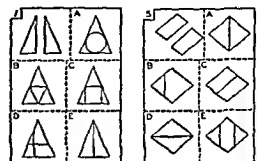
Fig. 6.—Continued.

TEST OF
MECHANICAL COMPREHENSION
FORM AA
George K. Bennett, Ph.D

DIRECTIONS

Fill in the requested information on your ANSWER SHEET

Now line up your answer sheet with the test booklet so that the "Page 1" arrow on the booklet meets the "Page 1" arrow on the answer sheet. Then look at Sample X on this page. It shows pictures of two rooms and asks "Which room has more of an echo?" Because it has neither rugs nor curtains there is more of an echo in room "A", so blacken the space under A on your answer sheet. Now look at Sample Y and answer it yourself Fill in the space under the correct answer on your answer sheet.

X

Which room has more of an echo?
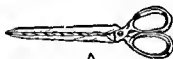
Y

Which would be the better shears for cutting metal?

On the following pages there are more pictures and questions. Read each question carefully, look at the picture, and fill in the space under the best answer on the answer sheet. Make sure that your marks are heavy and black. Erase completely any answer you wish to change. Be certain that you use the right column on the answer sheet for each page. The arrow on the page should meet the arrow on the answer sheet.

DO NOT MARK THIS BOOKLET—PUT YOUR ANSWERS ON THE ANSWER SHEET

Drawings by Helen Gabriel
Copyright 1940
The Psychological Corporation

Fig 7.—Front and Back Pages of Bennett's Test of Mechanical Comprehension (The Psychological Corp)

PUT YOUR ANSWERS ON THE ANSWER SHEET.
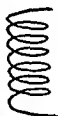
57

Which of these wires offers more resistance to the passage of an electric current?
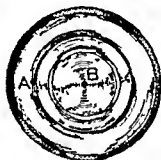
58

Which spot on the wheel travels faster?

59

Which cannon will shoot farthest?
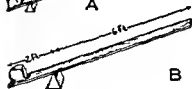
60

With which arrangement can a man lift the heavier weight?

Fig. 7.—Continued.

by psychological tests. These have great potential value for application in business situations and have already found considerable use.

The classification tests based on general mental aptitude or intelligence (see Fig. 9) are probably the most useful of the mental tests. The first value of these tests is to indicate at what level a person will do his best work. Some people belong permanently with the office boys, some have the potential abilities of officers of the firm. Seniority has possibilities for indicating the individuals who deserve extra privileges and more pay, but it tells little of the responsibilities that a person is able to shoulder. Although high intelligence in itself is no guarantee that suitable personality characteristics will be associated with it and that the person will be equal to a responsible position, yet good intelligence is a prerequisite of heavy responsibilities. The higher the level of intelligence, the fewer are those who have it. Such people are worth watching.

Measures of the Emotions and Interests.—There is no test of simple emotion that has been used as an employment aid, although the so-called lie detector has been experimented with in other personnel situations. The lie detector is an instrument which simultaneously measures blood pressure, breathing, and reaction time, and records these measurements. Physical reactions change with the emotional state; by subjecting an individual to word stimuli that would arouse emotions in the guilty, but not in the innocent, lies have been detected. It is difficult to use a lie detector on the employees of a firm because of the consideration of good public relations. Where it has been applied, it has usually been used with the statement that the purpose in using it on employees was to clear them and to give definite indication to the police that the theft or sabotage was an outside job.

The interest inventories, previously mentioned, should probably be classified with the emotional measures though, of course, interests are not simple emotions. Measures of interests

MINNESOTA CLERICAL TEST

(formerly the Minnesota Vocational Test for Clerical Workers)

by Dorothy M. Andrew, Donald G. Paterson, and Howard P. Longstaff

Name_____   Date_____

TEST 1—Number Comparison	TEST 2—Name Comparison
Number Right_____	Number Right_____
Number Wrong_____	Number Wrong_____
Score = R—W_____	Score = R—W_____
Percentile Rating_____	Percentile Rating_____

Instructions

On the inside pages there are two tests. One of the tests consists of pairs of names and the other of pairs of numbers. If the two names or the two numbers of a pair are *exactly the same* make a check mark (√) on the line between them. If they are *different*, make no mark on that line. When the examiner says "Stop!" draw a line under the last pair at which you have looked.

Samples done correctly of pairs of Numbers

79542   79524

5794367   √   5794367

Samples done correctly of pairs of Names

John C. Linder   John C. Linder

Investors Syndicate   √   Investors Syndicate

Now try the samples below.

66273394   66273984

357384378_____   357384578

New York World_____   New York World

Cargill Grain Co._____   Cargill Grain Co.

This is a test for Speed and Accuracy. Work as fast as you can without making mistakes.

Do not turn this page until you are told to begin.

FIG. 8.—First Page of the Minnesota Clerical Test. (The Psychological Corp.)

Fig 9.—Front Page of Wesman's Personal Classification Test (The Psychological Corp)

have proved very useful in placing people among congenial associates and in the kind of work best suited to them.

Tests of Sociability.—Sociability might be termed an attitude toward people, so we will look among the attitude and personality indicators for instruments that will diagnose this characteristic. A number of such devices have been found, an example being the Washburn Social Adjustment Inventory. Gordon and Floyd Allport developed an instrument designed to indicate whether a person is ascendant or submissive in his dealings with others, and this instrument was revised by Beckman for use in business. In most cases, sociability is investigated by the same instrument that delineates other personality characteristics. The Bernreuter Inventory, for instance, presents a variety of questions regarding a person's neurotic tendency, self-sufficiency, introversion-extroversion, dominance-submission, sociability, and confidence. There are a good many other instruments of a similar kind, but it must be remembered that all of them are of the descriptive type and permit what the subject believes are the "best answers." They must all be used with a great deal of caution.

Tests Measuring Influence of the Environment.—When we begin to consider this factor, we immediately think of a test of fatigue, but unfortunately there is no satisfactory test of this kind. There are tests for color-blindness, general vision, and hearing acuity, which were already mentioned. The amount of noise in a workroom and the amount of light on a bench can be accurately measured, and experiments can be conducted to determine the optimum conditions of work. The same has also been done for heat and humidity, and a great deal of information is available regarding the best environmental conditions for work. These tests, except for vision and hearing, are not used in employment situations but have other personnel values.

Tests for Supervisors.—There are no tests that have been designed to indicate the amount of supervision a person will require, although intelligence and mental health measures,

together, give some indication There has been an effort, on
the other hand, to measure an individual's ability to become
a supervisor, as for instance, the test, *How Supervise?* by
Quentin W. File and H H. Remmers. This test is designated
to select candidates for supervisory work and to measure their
work in a training course

Chapter 15

EVALUATING THE INTERVIEWEE

In order to evaluate an interviewee, the interviewer must ascertain facts and then determine the meaning or implications of those facts. We have discussed the job description in some detail, as well as the technique of asking questions and using tests to determine whether the individual can do the job. In this chapter we are interested in a different set of facts, specifically, those which will indicate something of the interviewee's personality, especially when suitable tests are not available.

First we must draw the distinction between fact and implication. An applicant reports that he is thirty years old. That is a fact. The implication or meaning of that fact, however, depends somewhat upon the job in question. If the job is that of supervisor of a group of older men who prefer a boss as old as they, the age of this applicant would imply that he is too young. If the job is that of beginning at the bottom of some occupation to work his way up, the age might imply that he is too old.

An interviewer should become clearly aware of the distinction between facts and the uses he can legitimately make of the facts. It is quite possible that the facts be established beyond any doubt yet the implications drawn from them be mistaken beyond any possibility of being correct. For the purpose of examining these implications, let us divide them into three types:

1. Indirect implications drawn by analogy
2. Direct implications drawn from group data
3. Direct implications drawn from individual data

Indirect Implications by Analogy.—The history of personality study is filled with facts interpreted by analogy—that is applied to the understanding or solution of a problem to which they have apparent but no real reference.

Ancient, so-called sciences of character reading like astrology, phrenology, and physiognomy, all operated on the basis of reasoning by analogy, and have long since been discarded. The process of analogical reasoning can be illustrated from these systems. We all agree that cause precedes effect in time. A rock is thrown; it strikes someone and injures him. The sun shines and the temperature rises. A bright star shines in the sky, and at the time of its ascendency a child is born. Just as the sun controls the warmth of the day, said the ancients, the star controls the destiny of the child. Another illustration is the significance of the "bulldog jaw." A bulldog has the reputation of being very determined and stubborn. It also has a noticeable heavy, strong jaw. So this man who has a heavy, strong jaw must also be determined and stubborn, say those who reason by analogy.

The interviewer will want to discard not merely the incorrect systems of character interpretation mentioned above, he must also watch every tendency of his own to reason by analogy. Such reasoning may sometimes be helpful in hunting for clues, or for illustrating a point otherwise proved, but it is a dangerous technique when used as a basis for conclusions. No reasoning by analogy can ever prove anything!

Direct Implications Drawn from Group Data.—An applicant may report that he is a Hungarian or a German or a Swiss, and we find ourselves with a fact which can only be interpreted through the group referred to. Suppose that the individual reports that he is from Switzerland. We know that three languages, German, French, and Italian, are commonly spoken there, but are we certain, then, that this person speaks three languages? Of course we are not, but we do have a clue to follow. There is a reasonable possibility that he may have learned the three languages. We can ask him and find out.

Practically all facts in group data are of this clue-providing but uncertain nature. Here is a man who is a college graduate. This fact suggests that he may be well informed since most college graduates are rather well informed. But this particular person may have evaded almost all learning and glided through college like a fast runner sometimes gets through all interference on a crowded football field—almost untouched. Church membership also, suggests good character but does not prove it. One individual who had good character, on the other hand, took employment in a gambling house for a year to study psychology. The fact that a person was born in Germany suggests that he can speak German, but does not establish it. He may have been brought to Japan while very young and may speak only Japanese.

The interviewer must be alert to avoid interpreting group data too glibly. Sometimes he may not even realize that he is dealing with group inferences unless he is careful. An example of this is the interpretation of age data. Even when insurance and pension factors do not dictate arbitrary age limits, people usually think in terms of group data. What could possibly be expected, for instance, of a man of 94? Yet George Bernard Shaw wrote for money after he was 94, and sold his work. Particularly in the second half of life, facts of age can become group data and, as such, easily misinterpreted. The interviewer has not determined directly what a person can do when he has merely found out that the person is fifty years old.

Direct Implications Drawn from Individual Data.—When the interviewer is working with individual data he is on the firmest ground. Yet, again, he must be careful of the inferences he draws from his facts. Suppose he finds that a particular applicant is a very intelligent person. This would be a very important fact, but it does not indicate beyond question that the person will use his intelligence in his work. He might be too indifferent or carefree to apply his abilities, as is frequently found in bright people during their college years. The interviewer must determine something of the individual's

work attitudes before he can infer how the capable person will apply his abilities.

Facts are important only because of what they imply, so the interviewer must develop the habit of carefully checking these implications. People have been unemployed, yet refused work; sick, yet unwilling to call a doctor; rich, yet miserly; faced with wonderful opportunities, yet unhappy. So the interviewer, in gathering facts, must constantly determine what they mean to the applicant. The fact that a man's father died at the age of 65 does not seem to be a fact of much importance. Yet, if the applicant believes his father died at this age because he worked too hard in his forties, and if the applicant is now forty and intends to ease up in his work, the fact might be very important.

Facts Available To The Interviewer

As the applicant sits in the interview his physical presence, his emotional responses, and his mental reactions each present a group of facts to be considered. Although mind, body, and emotions operate together in reality, let us separate them for analysis and discussion.

Physical Factors.—A list of physical factors observable in the interview includes: (1) body shape, (2) weight, (3) age, (4) sex, (5) clothing, (6) body care, (7) jewelry, (8) hand-writing.

Kretschmer, a German psychiatrist, presented a hypothesis that stoutly-built people with broad, sturdy trunks are sociable and extroverted. Slender, thin-chested, narrow-stomached individuals he found cold, reserved, and introverted. Subsequent investigation finds some truth in this theory, although, since it is in the nature of group data, it should not be relied upon by the interviewer. He can, however, use body shapes as clues. To determine if the heavy-set person before him is actually jovial and sociable, however, he must resort to questioning. Is the slim-bodied person shy and reserved? Only questioning will make this known.

Both the conditions of being overweight or underweight suggest lack of endurance, but by no means prove it. There is a further question as to when a person is overweight or underweight, since these states are related to body build. Some individuals can healthfully carry much more flesh than can others, and some people who are naturally thin have considerable energy. Nevertheless, the interviewer is presented with suggestive facts if the applicant seems overweight or underweight. If the job requirements call for long periods of standing or considerable expenditure of energy, the interviewer will want to investigate how these individuals measure up physically. The medical examination will determine health or illness and the condition of the organs of the body, but give only indirect implications as to the potential energy of an individual. Sometimes quite fat or thin people can pass medical examinations when they are unable to meet competition in active pursuits.

Some reasonably reliable group data have been gathered with regard to age. Age norms for growth in children have been well established. For adults we may separate the norms for aptitudes from those for achievement. In regard to aptitude (inherited ability) the average person increases in power until he reaches approximately his twenty-second year. Then his abilities hold relatively stable until fifty, at which time they begin to decline somewhat slowly till sixty, faster then till seventy, and very rapidly after that. These data, we must remember, apply to the average. They mean that the average person gets no brighter nor more clever or alert after he has reached his twenty-second year. He can, of course, increase his knowledge and skill, but this is another matter. At fifty, when the decline begins, the ability to learn and to adjust to new conditions is one of the first abilities to weaken, while vocabulary is one of the longest to remain. In general, habits that are in use do not recede rapidly.

The average age span of accomplishment follows a little after the age of greatest aptitude. Achievements in different fields come a little sooner or later, depending on their nature, but in general the ages from thirty-five to forty-five represent

the height of the achievement curve. Then, for another ten years, achievements may remain relatively high, after which they tend to drop rather rapidly.

The interviewer, however, must remember that such information is group data, and should be used only as the source of clues and suggestions. A particular applicant of forty-five may already have begun to show the decline of old age while another of sixty may have another twenty or more years of usefulness ahead of him, as did Henry Ford.

The factor of the applicant's sex is probably of greatest importance in business, in the area of employee motivation. Because the average woman gives up work when she is married, or soon after, the average young woman does not have the same motivation to make a career of her work that, for instance, her brother does. This may mean less regular attendance or less application while she is on the job. But here again, we must point out that this inference applies only to the "average woman"; and is to be applied to the individual only after further investigation.

Many individuals have believed, and some people still believe, that women have less intelligence than men. All experimental investigation, however, indicates an equality of the sexes so far as general intelligence is concerned. From the many studies of special sex differences it has been found that, in particular abilities, men are sometimes found a little superior on the average and sometimes women are found superior. These differences have been summarized by Johns[1] as follows:

Men Excel In:	Women Excel In:
Arithmetic tests	Memory tests
Spatial thinking tests	Verbal tests
Sustained logical work	Number checking tests
Reaction time	Pattern recognition tests
Speed of tapping	Speed of word association
Muscular strength	Mirror drawing
Muscular coordination	Quick adaptation and shift of attention
Dexterity with tools	Finger dexterity
History	English
Sciences	Drawing and art forms
Mathematics	

[1] Ralph Leslie Johns, Psychology in Everyday Living (New York: Harper & Bros., 1950), pp. 287-88.

Here we have facts that men and women differ as shown above. These group data suggest clues to follow in interviewing an individual.

Clothing varies in fit, style, suitability, expensiveness, newness, and upkeep. Any one of these factors suggests a clue regarding the person who is wearing it. One of the authors, in an experimental mood, once went, to have a gypsy tell his fortune. After the reading, he related all he knew about palmistry, declared that it was absolutely useless, and insisted on sitting in the gypsy tent until the fortune teller told him how she had found out what she had told him. Finally the gypsy reached over, rubbed the cloth of his suit between her fingers, and estimated within three dollars what the suit had cost. She pointed out the degree to which it needed pressing. She manipulated the callouses on his hand and described the degree of work needed for such callouses. She pointed out that he had made a few casual remarks that had indicated his occupation, and these facts she had put in a different context and retold him.

Interviewers are certainly not gypsies and should not get the idea that they have been retained to tell fortunes. Every interviewer, however, should know that people carry around with them many suggestive clues as to their personality and habits. When a person wears clothing that does not fit, it suggests that he is either financially handicapped and wearing something he did not select or simply that he is careless. The person dressed in clothing that is not suitable to the occasion carries the suggestion that he is naïve and inexperienced. If everything that a person wears is new, it suggests that he or she may be "all dolled up" for the occasion. The wearer of expensive clothing implies that he is wealthy or that he has put a relatively high value on appearances. None of these suggestions may be true, but the interviewer does not have to guess. He can direct the conversation and pose questions that will determine the facts. His observation suggested valuable possibilities.

The condition and care of the body afford another prolific source of suggestions regarding a person's habits. An indi-

vidual can always be very clean and neat in his dress, yet very careless in his work, but this is not to be expected unless his work motivation is poor. The care of fingernails, hair, and clothing, and the use of cosmetics, all suggest habits in other fields. The interviewer should draw no conclusions from appearances without further questioning. But, when interviewing a person who is somewhat unkempt, he may well question him as to his ability to meet the standards of neatness which will be required. A person who is unduly scrubbed and shining is to be suspected of usually living below the requirements of interviews, so far as his personal upkeep is concerned. Here, again, the interviewer's opportunity to ask questions is essential. Appearances provide him with the clues; a little skillful and diplomatic questioning can reveal the answers.

Wedding and engagement rings are the most common jewelry worn, and usually mean what they signify, but not always. An interviewer can never be too careful about verifying such a fact as marriage if it is important to the job under consideration. Widows and widowers, in particular, often wear their wedding rings even though they are living single lives again. Friendship and fraternity rings sometimes mean engagement and sometimes mean nothing. The cost of jewelry and the taste with which it has been selected, like the factors of clothing and body care, often provide useful clues to the personality. But, since jewelry is sometimes worn because it was received as a gift, every hint the interviewer sees in it must be verified by questioning before it can be accepted. This questioning need not be direct. Lavish jewelry suggests an ego-centered personality, but the interviewer, certainly does not have to say this. He may, in this case, question the individual about his friends, his social interests, and his family obligations until he can see about how closely the man's life circles about himself.

The soundness of handwriting as a clue in evaluating the employee is an ambiguous topic. It has been made the subject of interpretation by fakers as well as by legitimate scientists. Unless the interviewer has had special university training in the interpretation of handwriting, he had better avoid it alto-

gether. He will particularly want to be careful about interpretations by analogy in assuming, for instance, that long lines are analogous to long steps and long strokes and therefore indicate an athletic person. It is better to stay with the simple, direct implications, such as the belief that a sloppy sheet of handwriting suggests sloppy work habits. This latter conclusion should not, however, he made entirely from the handwriting, but should be checked by questioning.

Emotional Reactions.—In examining emotional reactions, it is well to remember that signs and symptoms of activity are what are being looked for. Body structure, as an indication of activity, is always to be used as a basis of suggestions rather than as a conclusion. A hard muscular body does indicate activity, and a soft flabby body suggests inactivity, but they tell us nothing of the causes of the activity. The flabby person may be just recovering from a long illness, the muscular person just returning from summer camp. It is very difficult to separate signs of dissipation from signs of illness. Many inferences drawn from the contours of the face or body—for instance, that a heavy jaw indicates determination, that thick lips suggest sensuality, or that large ears suggest generosity—have been found to be pure superstitions.

In looking for emotional reactions, the interviewer will do well to observe the applicant's posture and the amount of tension or nervousness he exhibits. He will listen to the laughter and notice whether it comes easily or in quick inhibited driblets. He will look for indications of undue reserve. He will notice whether, in any way, the person's behavior is bizarre or eccentric. From any such signs he will draw no conclusions directly, but he will carry on with questions, following up the hints he has received from behavior and manner.

Mental Reactions.—The interviewer should realize that there are no direct, physical indicators of a bright mind. A large head or brightness of the eyes tells nothing about intelligence; morons may have as sparkling eyes as anyone else. Quickness of response and a "gay line of chatter" indicate

temperamental rather than intellectual factors. Some years ago at the Children's Hospital in New York there was a little feeble-minded girl who was the pet of the place. She had large, luminous brown eyes and brown hair, and was always laughing and talking in a gay manner. She was a universal favorite, yet her IQ placed her among the feeble-minded.

When the interviewer operates without the benefit of intelligence tests, there are three signs of alertness that he may watch for. One of these is vocabulary. If the individual expresses himself with a selective vocabulary and says what he needs to say clearly and without undue repetitions, it can be taken as one indication of alertness. If an individual has a wide range of information, it is also a good sign. If this information is arranged in any kind of meaningful pattern, it is a still better. This last point could be expressed in another way. Does the interviewee's attention stay on one topic until meaningful units of it have been completed or does his attention jump around with subjects introduced and left hanging in mid-air? A third area which the interviewer can examine in looking for indications of intelligence is that of mental skills. The individual who possesses accounting, engineering, or other similar skills is obviously reasonably alert.

In evaluating the interviewee, the interviewer must always differentiate between facts and the inferences he draws from those facts. He is faced with two major sources of error: first, he may fail to get the necessary facts, and second, he may get the facts but draw improper inferences from them. Continual alertness and care are required to avoid both these mistakes.

Indications of Maladjustment

Many people will remember that, during World War II, help was in such great demand that the joke was: "Put your hand on him. If he is warm, hire him!" But even in those days care was taken to avoid hiring troublemakers. The interviewer, therefore, must know some of the signs that suggest that he is confronted with such a person.

The employment interviewer, however, is not a psychiatrist. He cannot be expected to diagnose maladjustment. On the other hand, when there is a choice of personnel, he can well afford to reject, or send for more expert examination, those who do not seem to him to be well adjusted to their fellows or their environment.

If the interviewer believes he is confronted with someone who is poorly balanced, he can check this suspicion a bit further by applying the principle that a normal person will usually make a common response to certain ordinary stimuli. A few simple techniques for such testing will be helpful.

The first is to examine a person's ability to attend normally to a conversation. If the individual's power of attention seems to be easily broken up or diverted for no apparent reason to unrelated subjects, or if a subject is abandoned in the middle of a sentence, the interviewer can infer some internal disturbance.

Another area to probe is a person's orientation. If he is confused to the extent of not seeming to recognize exactly where he is, or why he has come, or what he wants, the implication exists that something is wrong.

Still another technique is to notice if the person avoids or over-responds to some simple question. An applicant for an office job, for instance, talked normally enough until it became clear that he was not a native of the town, at which point the interviewer asked him where he had come from. At this simple question the man immediately showed signs of agitation declaring that his privacy was being invaded. In another case, the interviewer, in reading an application, remarked humorously, "Your handwriting in some places is almost as bad as mine." The applicant became angry immediately and asserted that he did not intend to be insulted.

The interviewer may also watch for a number of habit responses, which have been classed as generally undesirable. Such behavior is reasonably easy to detect when abnormally developed. Even though the interviewer must be very careful of his judgments of maladjustment, he will always want to

get the applicant best suited to the job and so must examine all available evidence.

Substitute Responses.—Substitute responses are a common result of being stimulated and not knowing how to react. An illustration is the businessman who gives his secretary a severe reprimand after having had an altercation with a customer. Usually a person is not aware of misplacing his responses, and often there is no apparent cause for the particular thing he does. Simple examples of this kind of behavior are fidgets and tics. These are meaningless in themselves, but they indicate a blocked reaction to some previous stimulus and are misplaced responses. A great many people have one or more tics; if a person has a number of them, it is probable that he is or has been under the pressure of stimuli to which he could not make immediate and suitable response.

Defense Mechanisms.—Nearly everyone finds his environment rather hard at times and, consequently, builds some defenses against it. This is a normal procedure. It smooths down the rough edges of life a little and makes it more livable. But some people who have not been able to adjust well in certain ways, protect themselves too much. They build defenses that shut them off from reality and, in consequence, leave them handicapped. Below are some defense mechanisms that should be watched for by the employment interviewer.

Projection as a Defense Mechanism. When a person attributes to others his own characteristics, problems, or failures, it is called "projection." The common annoying form of this trait found every day in business is the blaming of others for a person's own failures. Occasionally, everyone will do this; with some people, however, it is habitual. These are the individuals who seldom can get along with any boss, and often quarrel with their associates. In talking with them, one finds that their failure has always been the fault of someone else. A person who has this characteristic in a marked degree can be a very difficult employee.

Rationalization. Rationalization is the use of reason to make us feel better about something we feel we shouldn't have done. More commonly it is known as "making excuses." It can work for the future, too, providing us with many comforting reasons for doing what we wish to do but shouldn't. The difficulty with the habitual rationalizer is that it is almost impossible to "pin him down" to his responsibilities. He can always give a dozen reasons why he didn't get his job done properly.

Compensation. When an individual carries on a secondary activity in place of a primary one in which he cannot succeed, he is compensating. This, of course, may be good or bad depending upon the nature of the two activities. It is usually bad when the individual takes up an inferior activity in place of a sound one, as in the case of the person who takes pride in his grandfather's accomplishments instead of his own or the person who takes pride in his ability to predict the weather instead of his ability to get his work done. Sometimes people who have a general feeling of inferiority over-compensate and give the impression of feeling very superior. Actually, they act superior in order to be comfortable among associates to whom they really feel inferior.

Negativism. This is a habit of continually saying, "No, let's not do that," or "No, let's do it some other way." Although the word "co-operation" may be in the vocabulary of one who always adopts this negative attitude, its meaning has never found its way into his nervous system. This defense mechanism is supposed to result from an unkind, oppressive authority exerted over the person in childhood. Since the negativistic person does not want to do anything, or very little, in the way that others want to do it, he is a difficult person to work with.

Selective Forgetting. Perhaps the employment interviewer will encounter selective forgetting more frequently than any of the other defenses. Often the individual who has strange lapses about his past is, in reality, shielding himself. In some

get the applicant best suited to the job and so must examine all available evidence.

Substitute Responses.—Substitute responses are a common result of being stimulated and not knowing how to react. An illustration is the businessman who gives his secretary a severe reprimand after having had an altercation with a customer. Usually a person is not aware of misplacing his responses, and often there is no apparent cause for the particular thing he does. Simple examples of this kind of behavior are fidgets and tics. These are meaningless in themselves, but they indicate a blocked reaction to some previous stimulus and are misplaced responses. A great many people have one or more tics; if a person has a number of them, it is probable that he is or has been under the pressure of stimuli to which he could not make immediate and suitable response.

Defense Mechanisms.—Nearly everyone finds his environment rather hard at times and, consequently, builds some defenses against it. This is a normal procedure. It smooths down the rough edges of life a little and makes it more livable. But some people who have not been able to adjust well in certain ways, protect themselves too much. They build defenses that shut them off from reality and, in consequence, leave them handicapped. Below are some defense mechanisms that should be watched for by the employment interviewer.

Projection as a Defense Mechanism. When a person attributes to others his own characteristics, problems, or failures, it is called "projection." The common annoying form of this trait found every day in business is the blaming of others for a person's own failures. Occasionally, everyone will do this; with some people, however, it is habitual. These are the individuals who seldom can get along with any boss, and often quarrel with their associates. In talking with them, one finds that their failure has always been the fault of someone else. A person who has this characteristic in a marked degree can be a very difficult employee.

PART III

TYPES OF INTERVIEWS

of these cases, it will be obvious that the whole subject is distasteful; even some essential details seem to be forgotten altogether. Again, the interviewer must remember that all people are subject to these mechanisms. It is only when selective forgetting appears to be extensive, an habitual method of self-defense, that the interviewer will take a serious view of it.

Withdrawal. We all like to "let George do it" occasionally. But some people who have experienced much difficulty or failure withdraw as an everyday method of making life easier. The reasoning seems to be: "If I don't try, I cannot be blamed for failing." Some people's histories indicate that they have been standing on the side lines much more than has been good for them. This has cost them skills that they might otherwise have learned, and it has developed in them a habit of adjustment at a low level of success that they are likely to carry into the future.

Identification. There is assurance for anyone in identifying himself with a more successful or happier person. All of us do it, but, again, some do it too much. This mechanism is one of the principal motivations for endless reading of romances or attendance at the movies. When the individual identifies himself with someone who has succeeded or is succeeding, it may help him try harder and succeed himself or, on the other hand, it may rob him of all his own ambition. Identification is sometimes the defense mechanism of a failure. "No one in our family has ever amounted to much." "My father failed in his career and had to accept a poor place in life as he grew older; I am just like him."

The employment interviewer has a heavy responsibility in evaluating the people who come before him; he must be fair to both the applicants and his company. Experience and his own background will indicate how far he must go in examining the difficult areas of personality to find the indications of abnormality.

Chapter 16

THE EMPLOYMENT INTERVIEW

When we hear the word "interview," most of us immediately think of the employment interview since this is the type that almost every individual has experienced sometime in his life. The importance of this interview is equal to its frequency. It has been estimated that for office and production jobs it costs, on the average, a hundred dollars to hire one individual and bring him to a level of productivity that pays for his wage.[1] If the employment interviewer makes a mistake, the cost can be tremendous. What with union agreements, seniority rights, and the general industrial climate, it is not so easy to discharge a man as it once was. If a man is employed with a firm all of his working life and is an inferior employee all of that time, he can, when social security payments and pension benefits are added to daily losses from inferior work, cost the company a considerable sum. It has been estimated by one authority that a worker who holds his job for forty-five years requires an average capital investment of one hundred thousand dollars. This is a sufficient investment to justify a very careful interview.

There are a number of related procedures which precede and follow the employment interview and influence it. These are:

1. Recruiting
2. Screening
3. Testing (screening is sometimes done by testing)
4. Investigation of personal history
5. Interviewing

[1] John F. Mee (ed), *Personnel Handbook* (New York: The Ronald Press Co, 1951), p. 417.

All such help improves the "batting average" of the employment interviewer. Some companies, however, have policies against employing relatives or friends of present employees.

Advertising is done with the purpose of bringing in good prospects and not appealing to people who must be turned away. To meet these requirements, the advertisement must be explicitly and skillfully worded. The preparation of such material usually requires professional knowledge outside the scope of this discussion. Mixed advertisements for carpenters, stenographers, and janitors are usually unsatisfactory, and tend to bring in the hopeful rather than the skillfull. It is better to give each "want" its own space—skilled carpenters are likely to scan the want ads for such a heading as "carpenters wanted." Work should not be so briefly described that the notice is misleading. If a lathe operator is wanted, it is best to name the type of lathe. Otherwise, the interviewer may find himself wasting a good deal of interviewing time turning away people he did not wish to see. Enough data should be given on hours, wages, and working conditions so that only those who find them satisfactory will come in for an interview.

A "labor scout" may be sent out to look for prospects. Interviewing time may be saved by giving the scout instructions based on company experience. In some localities, particular cultural groups are better prospects than other groups. Scouts that contact schools or colleges may find certain institutions better for their purposes than others, either because of the type of training they give, or because they are more careful in making recommendations.

By careful recruiting of good prospects, the interviewer's time can be conserved and his selections improved.

Screening

Except in abnormal periods such as wartime, the majority of companies have more applicants than available positions. Many of these applicants do not qualify because of age, lack of specific training or needed experience, or because of obvious

6. The physical examination
7. Preliminary selection in the employment office
8. Final selection by foreman or supervisor
9. Placement
10. Follow up

Recruiting.—Methods of securing applicants bear directly on the interviewing that is done by bringing in better or poorer prospects When a company budgets its labor requirements by the year, or by the six-month period, as some of them do, the interviewer can even out his load by using his influence to bring in the applicants in uniform numbers It is difficult to interview carefully, a great many people in a short time for an emergency need.

The principal recruiting techniques are (1) the use of employment agencies, (2) soliciting leads from present employees, (3) advertising and (4) scouting All recruiting provides company contact with the public and offers an opportunity to build company good will.

There are good and bad employment agencies. The poor ones do not study the needs of the various firms to which they send help and often flood them with undesirable prospects A good agency will examine its clients conscientiously and compare them carefully with the job descriptions received from the business firms. Government, school, and college agencies often meet this requirement There are good private agencies too. A co-operative relationship with selected employment agencies will often save a firm a good deal of interviewing time.

Soliciting the names of possible applicants from those already employed is based on the axiom that "birds of a feather flock together" A good workman would be expected to bring in good prospects In addition, when employees are willing to bring their friends to the same plant, they have probably given them a good report of the company. A significant advantage, particularly in small business, is the fact that the old employees are often willing to spend a little time "breaking-in" their friends and helping in their orientation and training.

to employ Christmas help, or in chain stores about to hire help for the Easter holidays. Figure 10 shows a form used as an aid in such interviewing.

BIGELOW-SANFORD CARPET COMPANY, INC.
PRELIMINARY EMPLOYMENT APPLICATION

LAST NAME (PRINT)	FIRST	MIDDLE	MARITAL STATUS
HOME ADDRESS		CITY	STATE	PHONE
BUSINESS ADDRESS	CITY	STATE	PHONE
DATE OF BIRTH	EDUCATION (HIGH SCHOOL—COLLEGE—POST GRADUATE)		
POSITION OR TYPE OF EMPLOYMENT DESIRED			
EXPERIENCE			
DATE_____	REFERRED BY_____		

FIG 10 —An Employment Card Used in the Screening Interview. (Bigelow Sanford Carpet Co)

A List of Open Requisitions.—A list of open requisitions is a memory aid for the screening interviewer—and final interviewer too. In large companies there are often quite a variety and number of vacancies to fill. A list of open requisitions is a briefing of these entered on a master sheet that can be read at a glance. Its use may save considerable time for the interviewer and often help place an applicant who otherwise would be sent away. An applicant who is not suitable for the job he came for may, nevertheless, answer satisfactorily the requirements of another position the company wants filled. The list of requisitions is a reminder of these opportunities.

Screening by Application Blank.—The application blank is a record in writing of pertinent information regarding the applicant. As a general rule it should ask all the questions that

physical conditions, and must be screened out. At the same time, there will be some who have qualifications that require careful consideration. There are three ways of screening these applicants.

1. By a short interview with an experienced interviewer.
2. By an application blank, preferably weighted.
3. By the use of psychological tests.

The Screening Interview.—From the simple consideration of rejecting the unfit, the preliminary interviewer can easily set up and work with all the factors that are absolute rather than relative. Should the worker be a citizen? Should he be in a certain age bracket? Does he need minimum education or experience? Should he be a man or a woman? Should he be of a certain height or weight?

But rejection of the unfit is not the sole aim, for this interview can be the best device for building good will among those who may be wanted applicants later, or who may become customers, or who are at least neighbors. This public relations function of screening requires the exercise of particular skill by the interviewer because of the short time (usually less than five minutes) alloted to any applicant.

The fact is, also, that many qualifications are relative, and among a group of unscreened applicants will be some the company wants to employ. This adds further difficulty to the screening interview. In consequence it is customary to assign an unusually experienced interviewer to this work. In addition to keeping in mind the characteristics that disqualify absolutely, such an interviewer will look for such factors as:

1. Basic educational background and information
2. Position and salary required
3. Past qualifying experience as to duties and responsibilities
4. The applicant's alertness and general attitudes
5. The various openings for which the applicant can be considered

The best example of this technique in operation can be observed in large department stores when they are preparing

FIG. 11.—An Employment Application, (Westinghouse Electric Corp.)

apply to the company's jobs that can be answered in writing. In some cases, just the small indications of sloppiness, bad handwriting, or poor spelling that appear on an application blank are sufficient to indicate those who have no chance of doing the work.

Application blanks have a number of uses. They can serve as the basis for the successful applicant's record. They can aid in the main interview by opening up areas of discussion and providing preliminary information. And they can serve the purpose we are most interested in here, that of screening.

In some cases weighted application blanks are devised. That a blank is "weighted" merely means that its items are designed to elicit information which will help to predict success on particular jobs. For instance, if being over fifty years of age is a handicap, it can be weighted low; if an advantage, it would be weighted high. If a college education is useless in the particular work applied for, it would be weighted low; if most college graduates succeed in the work, such education would be weighted high. There can be no application blanks weighted for jobs in general. Each weighted application blank relates to a certain job of a particular kind. A weighted application blank, once it is carefully validated, can save a good deal of time in screening and interviewing applicants.

Some companies have developed short-form application blanks primarily for screening, which have room for only the most pertinent information. The usual application blank, however, such as the one illustrated in Fig. 11, calls for information of the following nature:

1. Identifying information—name, address, telephone number, age, place of birth, social security number.
2. Family responsibilities—marital status of the applicant and the status of those in his immediate family.
3. Physique—height, weight, physical handicaps, major illnesses, operations.
4. Education—schools attended, most advanced grade reached, major subjects, preferred subjects, general standing.
5. Military record.

ability; using them one can avoid the sampling errors of the interview.

Many studies have indicated that, so far as determining future ability on the job is concerned, the employment interview can be aided considerably by the use of validated tests, or any other reliable objective data that can be obtained. The facts should be gathered and the tests given before the main interview, however, and the results made available to the interviewer.

Investigation of Personal History.—It has been recognized that the main interview benefits from the support of all the objective information obtainable. Consequently, before that interview takes place, it is helpful to check all the information of an objective nature that is provided by the screening process. This information will help to "fill in the picture," and offer an opportunity to check an applicant's memory and reliability. The sort of personal history items that can be checked are listed as follows:

Citizenship	Past employment
Education	Personal reputation
Evidences of leadership	Police record
Financial condition	Special achievement
Medical record	

There are a number of methods of getting this information, of which the reference is only one. Letters of recommendation brought by the applicant are not in very high repute as sources of information, but can be of some value as descriptions of the type of work done. No one asks for a recommendation from a person unless he expects a good report. By looking for the report of work done, however, rather than the eulogy of the applicant, something can be learned even from the traditional letter of recommendation.

Many companies send personal letters asking specific questions of the persons given as references, particularly if they are previous employers. A variation of this technique is to give data provided by the applicant and ask the previous employer to check and correct it. The telegraph and telephone, personal visits, and the services of a commercial investigator

6 Misdemeanors
7 Memberships officerships, community activities
8 Recreational skills and hobbies
9 Employment history—previous employers, dates of employment, type of work done, reasons for leaving
10 Job preferences and qualifications
11 Signature and date

Psychological Tests as a Screening Technique and Aid to Selection —Psychological tests screen to some extent by keeping away floaters who do not want to take the tests [2] Further, it is possible to use these tests at different levels of thoroughness A short twelve minute intelligence or classification test will eliminate most of the undesirable More complete testing will provide a variety of useful information, such as

1 Intelligence level which indicates possibilities of learning and development
2 Special aptitudes as finger dexterity or language comprehension (Special abilities discovered in this way sometimes suggest the use of an individual in ways that had not at first been considered)
3 Interests, which give some idea whether the applicant will be happy in the work
4 Emotional stability, which gives some indication whether the applicant is a happy, wholesome person or a possible troublemaker

The value of tests in relation to the interview is that they are objective instruments that help to cut through subjective or halo errors They are devices that indicate, much better than an interview, the amount of a person's general information or trade knowledge or degree of skill They are, particularly, a means for comparing people on a competitive basis Tests are quantitative, and the scores made are always referred to norms, which are the classified scores of other people Consequently, testing a person indicates how he "measures up" with others Tests, also, are relatively scientific samples of

<hr>

[2] The uses and value of tests are examined in detail in Chapter 14

Applicant's
Name _____

Employee or
Clock No. _____
(FILL IN AFTER EMPLOYMENT)

TELEPHONE CHECK WITH PREVIOUS EMPLOYERS

COMPANY	CITY AND STATE	TELEPHONE NO.

NAME OF PERSON CONTACTED

POSITION OF PERSON CONTACTED

1. I wish to verify some facts given by Mr. _____ who is applying for employment with our firm. What were the dates of his employment by your Company?

   From _____ 19____ To _____ 19____
   IS ANY PERIOD UNACCOUNTED FOR?

2. What was the nature of his job at the start and when he left?

   At start _____
   HAS APPLICANT OVER-RATED HIS JOB?

   At leaving _____
   HAS HE SHOWN PROGRESS?

3. He states that he was earning $____ per ____ when he left? Is that correct?

   Yes _____ No _____ $____
   (IF NO) WHAT DID HE FALSIFY?

4. What did his superiors think of him?

   DOES HE RESPECT AUTHORITY?

5. Did he have supervisory responsibility? (If yes) How did he carry it out?

   No _____ Yes _____
   CHECK WITH APPLICATION?

   DID OTHERS ACCEPT HIM AS A LEADER?

6. How hard did he work?

   IS HE A "GOLDBRICK"? INDUSTRIOUS?

7. How did he get along with others?

   IS HE A TROUBLE-MAKER?

8. How was his attendance record?

   IS HE STABLE AND CONSCIENTIOUS?

9. What were his reasons for leaving?

   VALID? CONSISTENT WITH REASONS HE GAVE?

10. Would you rehire him? (If no) Why?

    Yes _____ No _____
    (IF NO) WILL HE FIT INTO OUR COMPANY?

11. Did he have any domestic, financial or personal trouble which interfered with his work?

    No _____ Yes _____
    IS HE EMOTIONALLY MATURE?

12. Did he drink or gamble to excess?

    No _____ Yes _____
    IS HE EMOTIONALLY MATURE?

13. What are his strong points?

14. What are his weak points?

Comments. _____
WHAT ARE HIS CHANCES FOR SUCCESS IN OUR COMPANY?

WHAT POINTS WARRANT FURTHER INVESTIGATION?   Checked by _____ Date _____ 19____

TC-1

FIG. 12.—Telephone Check Form. (Science Research Associates.)

6. Extend a friendly greeting.

7. Do not let stereotypes, halos, or labels, make your decision for you; determine your own appraisal of the applicant.

8. Encourage the applicant to give detailed answers, and keep him to relevant material.

9. Always have control of the interview.

10. Examine carefully your own views and discount your own prejudices and "constant errors."

11. Be sincere.

12. Always be calm and undisturbed during the interview.

13. Prepare, some say memorize, a schedule or list of questions.

14. Give the applicant your undivided attention.

15. Be courteous and business like.

16. Use the interview to determine attitudes, opinions, trends of belief.

17. Be sure you understand each statement of the applicant as you go along.

18. Keep interview appointments promptly whenever you make them.

19. Do not be too easily satisfied, be sure your questions are completely answered.

20. Follow up leads given by the applicant in his statements.

21. Don't ask questions that can be answered by more reliable methods.

22. Use the interview to gain access to objective data

23. Make the interview a two way affair. Give the applicant some information about the company and the job.

24. Use the interview to gain information in addition to that already stated on the application blank.

25. Separate facts from inference.

26. Provide for privacy.

27. Evaluate the applicant in the light of the objective, every reaction, favorable or unfavorable, from the given point of the objective.

28. Maintain an impartial attitude.

29. Secure information about the interviewee before the interview.

30. Do not hurry or rush.
31. Do not imply the answers to your own questions.
32. Be as frank as possible.
33. Let the applicant tell his story; then help him supplement it.
34. Find out why he left his last job.
35. Ask some challenging questions.
36. Stop! Look! Listen! Remember that everything the applicant says and does is revealing.
37. Don't waste time repeating material listed on forms.
38. Establish pleasant associations with the interviewee.
39. Create a pleasant memory in the mind of the applicant whether or not he is hired.
40. Observe the ease and correctness of his speech.
41. Don't jump from subject to subject till each has been fully covered.
42. Do not let superficial answers or evasions stand without further probing.
43. Grant the applicant strict confidence in reference to anything he should say.
44. Encourage the interviewee to do a good deal of the talking.
45. Observe his clothing and general demeanor.
46. Mention several phases of the work in the applicant's experience and notice his interest or lack of interest. An interested employee is wanted.
47. Do not waste time. Push forward to the objective as rapidly as the applicant can readily follow.
48. Discover previous lengths of employment.
49. Record all data at once or at the earliest opportunity.
50. Do not be impertinent, superior, supercilious.
51. Avoid any words or mannerisms that might distract the interview.
52. Don't oversell the job to the applicant.
53. Do not ask questions that can be answered by "yes" or "no" if you can avoid it.
54. Don't write continually during the interview.
55. Don't leave the applicant "in the air" at the end of the

interview. Tell him definitely what your next step is going
to be.

56. Be careful of overhiring; i.e., taking a person who is quali-
fied for a higher position.
57. Adapt your conversation to the applicant.
58. Do not encourage an applicant whom you know you will
not be able to place.
59. Use the applicant's name occasionally when you speak to
him.
60. Employ symbols for ratings, they save time and space.
61. Never argue with the applicant.
62. Do not teach or preach in the interview.
63. Ask the kind of future the applicant eventually hopes for
in the company or in any other field.
64. Observe particularly the applicant's entrance and exit.
65. Help the applicant to understand the kind of facts he must
present to get the job.
66. Avoid asking personal questions until you have reached
the stage where the applicant has met all other require-
ments, and then, only after the reasons for these questions
are explained.
67. Render your interviewee a real service.
68. Exercise your sense of humor.
69. Ask your applicant how he learned about the company or
agency.
70. Compare applicants to other employees working under
similar conditions.
71. Do not linger over the dismissal of an applicant.
72. Find out how long an applicant will stay if he obtains the
job.
73. Prevent entering applicants from meeting and talking to
applicants who are leaving.

Aids and Suggestions for the Main Interview.—When the
interviewer prepares for his usual schedule of interviewing, he
will be able to make use of a number of aids that will facilitate
his work. Some of these have been presented in other por-
tions of this book. Here we will examine some of them very

briefly. Any one interviewer will not want to use all the aids given, but will select from the following list those that suit his particular needs.

1. The list of open requisitions
2. The personnel requisition
3. The occupational description
   (a) Job description
   (b) Critical requirements
4. Procedures and principles related to the main interview
5. Interview register
6. Interview blank
7. Interview rating scale
8. The interview guide
9. "The six basic factors"
10. The daily tally sheet

The List of Open Requisitions. This up-to-date summary of all the various job openings in the company at the time was already discussed in this chapter on page 285. Here it is enough to say that such information is indispensable to any interviewer.

The Personnel Requisition. The personnel requisition originates with some foreman or supervisor and says briefly, "I want help." When it reaches the interviewer, it should also tell the number of helpers needed, the kind of help they will be expected to render, whether they are needed for some emergency or needed permanently, and the date when they will be expected to go to work. (See Fig. 13.) Depending on the information which the interviewer already has regarding the job, the Personnel Requisition may tell much more. It may give a description of the work and describe the necessary characteristics of the workman. It may tell the estimated skill requirements of the job. In describing the job requirements, the Personnel Requisition is an addition to the Occupational Description which follows, but it has the added function of helping the interviewer organize his work. It tells him how

REQUISITION FOR NEW PERSONNEL

To: Personnel Department   Date _____

From: _____, Supervisor

The _____ Department requests a new staff member as follows:

Job Classification _____   New staff member will be:

Basis of Employment: Replacement for _____
- ☐ Probationary   For   ☐ Full-time   ☐ Budgeted Addition
- ☐ Temporary   ☐ Part-time   ☐ Unbudgeted Addition
- ☐ Other _____

Interview will be given by _____

If "addition" the reason for increasing the staff is: _____

QUALIFICATIONS

No. Years Exp. _____   Age Range _____

☐ Male   ☐ Female

☐ Experienced Person

☐ High School Beginner

Special qualifications or job requirements _____

For Use by Personnel Department

Proposed salary range $ _____ per month   Signed _____

Position filled beginning _____ By _____   Assistant Division Manager

Sources: _____

No. Interviewed _____   Approved _____

Salary $ _____ per month, Ladder _____ Exp. Cr. _____   Division Manager

If off-scale, next salary review date _____   Approved _____

Salary Approvals: _____   If unbudgeted, Adm. Vice Pres. _____

Fig 13—Supervisor's Requisition for New Personnel (Teachers Insurance & Annuity Association)

many people he must employ and at what time. If the interviewer has recruiting responsibility, he can get in touch with his sources of supply and have the applicants come in when they are wanted.

The Occupational Description. In interviewing a prospective employee it is necessary that the interviewer understand as completely as possible the sort of work that will be done by the selected applicant. There are a number of sources of such knowledge. The interviewer may have at some time held the job himself and know the work from personal experience. This, however, does not often happen. More frequently the interviewer will have been given an opportunity to study the work. He may have observed the workman and talked to him. He may have interviewed the foreman or supervisor in regard to the work.

Usually the interviewer will have been provided with some sort of occupational description which gives the requirements of the job. This will usually be written in simple declarative form by an experienced job analyst after consultation with both worker and supervisor but may be a checklist filled out by observing the work. (See Fig. 14.)

An Occupational Description is a verbal picture of an occupation. An occupation, in turn, is a series of jobs so much alike as to require similar aptitude, training, and experience. The description used by the interviewer is not so detailed that it could be used for determining the best way to do the work. It gives the general over-all picture and may be divided into two parts, one part describing the job, and one specifying the human abilities necessary to satisfy the requirements of the job description. Occasionally two distinct forms are used for these two functions, a job specification and a man description.

For interview purposes some interviewers like to examine job descriptions under a simple classifying system termed the Six H's. This is primarily a memory device to enable the interviewer to check quickly all the information he needs. The Six H's are:

Mail	Occasionally	Regularly	Filing, indexing, cataloguing, etc.	Occasionally	Regularly
Open ng mail			Letters		
Sorting mail			Reports		
Forwarding mail			Blueprints		
Stamping date of rece pt on mail			Drawings		
Stamping name of department on mail			Briefs		
Signing for registered mail			Case histor es		
Making up mailing list			Class records		
Checking mailing lists			Books (library records)		
Stamp ng envelopes, packages, etc.			Magaz nes		
Folding circular letters			Articles		
Inserting letters in envelopes			Speeches		
Tying up packages			Memoranda		
			Lectures		
Dictation			Minutes		
Letters			Follow-up files of letters not answered		
Articles			Keep card index of addresses		
Case histories			Bills		
Reports			Orders		
Minutes			Rece pts		
Speeches			Shipp ng orders		
Briefs			B lls of lad ng		
Lectures			Vouchers		
Memoranda					
			Telephone, etc.		
Transcription			Use of telephone—local		
Letters			Use of telephone—long d stance		
Articles			Answer telephone		
Case histories			Send telegrams		
Reports			Receive telegrams		
Minutes			Send cablegrams		
Speeches			Receive cablegrams		
Briefs			Decode telegrams		
Lectures			Decode cablegrams		
Memoranda			Relieve on telephone switchboard		
From dictaphone cylinders					
			Editorial duties		
Typewriting			Arrange for mimeograph ng		
Letters (copy)			Arrange for b nding		
Manuscripts			Arrange for pr nting		
Letters (not dictated)			Prepare mater al for printer		
Financial reports			Read proof		
Specifications			Read manuscr pts		
Vouchers			Abstract articles		
Checks			Get information from libraries		
Periodical reports			Make up forms for reports, etc.		
Orders					
Bills			**Duties Involving Meeting and Handling People**		
Receipts			Act on committees		
Briefs			Meet ca lers		
Minutes			Hand e complaints from callers in office and over telephone		
Lists					
Stencil cutting					

Fic 14.—List of Duties Used in Connection with Job Studies (New

DUTIES

	Occasionally	Regularly
Render decisions on questions asked by members of office force		
Conference with employer		
Conference with employees		
Planning work for another		
Distributing work among clerks, stenographers, etc.		
Making engagements and appointments		
Financial		
Compiling data (statistical)		
Prepare personal income tax for employer		
Check up city and county tax statements		
Make out monthly statements		
Make out household and personal checks		
Give checks to employer for signature		
Keep cash account		
Keep expense account		
Send out statements		
Deposit checks		
Take care of bank book		
Write receipts		
Ask for and file receipted bills		
Check bills and invoices		
Check and mail stock certificates		
Secure quotations from brokers		
Purchase foreign exchange		
Send out invoices for rents due		
Clerical		
Place telephone memoranda, messages, etc., where employer will see them		
Keep up engagement book or desk calendars		
Keep current date on calendars visible		
Order supplies for office		
Receive office supplies		
Make out requisitions		
Get quotations on supplies		
Arrange papers on desk		
Keep desks supplied with equipment		
Check up on supplies		
Take inventory		
Follow up of matters		
Make out shipping instructions		
Place articles on desk in order		
Place records and documents in safe		

	Occasionally	Regularly
Clinical		
Make maps		
Make charts		
Develop X ray photos		
Mount photos		
Make out patient forms		
Assign appointments		
Sterilizing		
Hand out clinic supplies		
Maintain student records		
Miscellaneous		
Make hotel reservations		
Make train and steamship reservations		
Purchase flowers, fruit, books, gifts		
Write suitable cards		
Write and acknowledge letters of condolence and congratulation		
Get theater, opera, concert, lecture tickets for employer		
Make out narcotic forms		
Make out grades		
Make arrangements for consultation		
Assist with laboratory work		
Shave dictaphone cylinders		
Make notes for next day's work		
Errands		
Review unfinished business file		
Other Duties		

1. What

The name and symbol of the job

The department in which the job occurs

A description of all activities, mental and physical, carried on by the worker

Understudy jobs

Length of training

Lines of promotion

2. Who

Sex

Age

Race or nationality (Laws prevent considering these factors in some states)

Physical requirements

(a) height-weight

(b) eyesight

(c) handicaps permitted

Mental requirements

(a) intelligence

(b) critical scores on any tests given

(c) education

Personality requirements

(a) interests that are helpful

(b) social requirements

(c) financial requirements

Experience requirements

3 How

Equipment and machinery used

Procedures

4 Why

Scope and significance of the work, why it is done

How it is related to other jobs

Wages and method of payment

Opportunities for learning

Opportunities for using one's own initiative

Opportunities for advancement

5. When
    Hours of work
    Overtime
    Night work
    Vacation allotment

6. Where
    Working conditions
    Travel

The Critical Requirements Approach. An effort has been made to both simplify and improve the information used by the employment interviewer by differentiating between good and poor workmen on the same job. In some cases this is done by test procedure—a method which provides critical scores that determine whether or not the applicant has enough of each critical ability. The marks of a good workman have also been determined by observation of good and poor workers, and described in requirements which can be used as criteria during the interview. In automobile driving, for instance, critical behaviors are such things as stopping for red lights, maintaining a safe distance from the car ahead depending on the speed, using caution at cross-roads, adjusting one's speed to visibility, and the like. A careful study of successful and poor workers will indicate the relative importance of each "behavior item" to success on the job. It is also possible to derive from such behaviors, physical mental and personality requirements. Beginning, then, with general background information similar to that in the job description, the critical requirement technique points out particular behaviors and abilities that have differentiated between good and poor workers.

Procedure for the Main Employment Interview. This whole book has been centered around the interview. Here we limit ourselves to naming the steps most closely associated with the employment interview.

1. Examine the requirements of the job.
2. Receive the applicant.

3. Study the filled-in application form and make sure it is complete.

4. Examine the results of such employment tests as are used by the firm.

5. Ask the necessary questions and give the necessary information.

6. Record the interview as it goes on or immediately after it is finished, on a form such as illustrated in Fig. 15.

7. Send the applicant to the medical department for a physical examination and to the supervisor of the department in which he will work for final approval.

8. Fill out such forms as personnel record cards, social security cards, and application for insurance.

9. Check your judgment by a follow-up after the employee is at work to determine whether he "made good."

The applicant may be rejected, or decide he does not want the job, at steps 3, 4, 5, 6, or 7. If this happens, go no farther with the applicant, of course, but be alert to find someone who can do the work.

Interview Register. Nearly every interview is reported in some way, but there are enormous differences among businesses in the extent to which they have organized the employment interview and keep a record of it. Some companies keep an extensive record of the interview, some only note the most salient facts.

The interview register is used in substitution for an application blank by some companies that do not have such forms, and may be as simple as a sheet of paper on which the interviewer enters the names of the interviewees, or such essential data as the source from which the applicant came, the address, or telephone number at which he can be reached, and the kind of work he is qualified to do.

Interview Blank. Interview blanks have the double function of directing the questioning and providing a record of the answers. They are often designed for particular purposes.

Fig. 15.—An Interview Record Form. (Standard Oil Co. of New Jersey.)

clothing, or appearance, the interviewer should remember that appearance is not to be rated as a general characteristic, but only as it relates to some particular task or job. Words may seem to be understood when they are not. The term "executive ability" is an example. If such a term appears on a rating scale, it should be analysed and defined so that the interviewer knows the specific characteristics called for when "executive ability" is rated.

Frequently rating scales are combined with other forms such as the interview guide.

The Interview Guide. Interview guides and patterned interviews have been fully discussed in Chapter 13. It is enough to mention here that they guide the questioning, provide space for recording, and give assistance in reaching a decision.

The Interviewer's Decision and the Six Basic Factors. If the interviewer has used a good interviewer's blank, rating scale, or guide, he should be ready at the end of the interview to render his decision. But in case he has none of these aids, he may check his judgment by evaluating his applicant on six basic factors.[4] These six factors are the following:

1. Informational. Does the applicant have adequate interests, skills, knowledge, and judgment for the work?
2. Motivational. Does the applicant have something to work for? How much security has he and what have his achievements been? What is his place in society and does he want to keep it? What are his ethics and personal philosophy?
3. Emotional Factors. Is the applicant emotionally mature? Has he progressed from personal dependence to some kind of independence and perhaps the acceptance of responsibility? Is he realistic and socially adjusted as contrasted to being isolated and daydreaming in his achievements?
4. Attitudinal Factors. Attitudes are emotionalized ideas that are associated with some permanent core or object. They are learned but change slowly. People have attitudes toward other people, toward jobs, toward the business

firms they have worked for, and toward themselves. The attitude toward self is often very important, particularly when an individual has developed an attitude of frustration and hopelessness.

5. *Behavioral Factors.* Does the individual have good living and working habits? Has he shown stability, and has he a good record for industry and perseverance?

6. *Physical Factors.* Can the applicant meet all the physical requirements of the job?

The Daily Tally Sheet. Before the interviewer calls in his next applicant he may wish to add the completed interview to the daily tally sheet. This is a record, not of a particular interview, but of a day's interviews. It shows at a glance how many interviews an interviewer has had, and can serve also to compile any selected data that is wanted at a particular time.

The Physical Examination.—If satisfactory so far as the interviewer is concerned, the applicant is sent for a physical examination. A man in poor physical condition cannot do good work. Physical defects of various kinds can interfere with a person's activities, causing accidents, spoiled work, and reduced output. Knowledge of an individual's condition can often guide him into work that his particular abilities permit him to do well. A physical examination by a physician is the answer to these possibilities.

Some companies do not allow the physician's records to leave the medical department. In these cases the personnel office will merely receive a statement, such as "unemployable" or "eye defects should be corrected" or perhaps with a "risk" rating of A, B, C, or D. Sometimes a more or less complete record is provided by the physician, indicating defects, general health, and the physical limits within which the applicant should operate.

Preliminary Selection in the Employment Office.—Somewhere along the series of procedures that has been described, it is possible that the employment interviewer has concluded that the applicant will make a good employee. A final inter-

Fig. 16.—An Employee's Record Form. (RKO Theatres.)

view may be necessary to collate all the information received and inform the successful prospect that he has passed all the hurdles presented In many companies he is still subject to final selection by the supervisor When such is the case, enough is implied when the interviewer says, "Now let's go down and see the department head We always send him a few of the very best applicants for final selection Those who stay must work with him, you know"

With careful preselection the foreman's task should be rather simple If he is satisfied with the newcomer, he will arrange to put him on the job and perhaps introduce him to his own men If he is dissatisfied, he should send the man back to the personnel office so that the rejection can be made as diplomatically as possible The foreman or department head should always explain his reason for rejection, so that a recurrence of the same mistake can be avoided

Placement Placement requires the establishment of the applicant's record (see Fig 16) in the personnel file

Follow-up—Follow up is useful for a number of reasons For the interviewer it is an opportunity to check his own judgment and improves his methods The follow up interview is discussed in Chapter 18

Chapter 17

STRESS, GROUP, AND BOARD INTERVIEWS

The Stress, Group, and Board interviews all have in common an element of stress, although it is of different kinds. The group and board interviews were not developed primarily as a means of applying stress. They exert primarily social pressures, although these pressures are of different kinds. In the group interview the stress comes from the associate applicants; in the board interview from the group of interviewers.

The Stress Interview.—The stress interview is a logical outgrowth of the times in which we live. Its theory is applied almost directly to the preparation of soldiers for battle by which they are made to crawl under a crossfire of live ammunition. How can you tell how a soldier will perform in combat unless he is tested under somewhat similar conditions beforehand?

But the stress interview did not spring full grown from a theory. As is usual with such techniques, it had a slow and progressive development. Just where its origin can be placed would be very difficult to say, but a probable beginning was in the endless discussions and soul searchings by the Germans as to why they lost the first World War.[1] In the early days of Hitler's military preparation, many psychological techniques were being given a trial in the belief that lack of such techniques was responsible for defeat in World War I. The most important of these was the development of the use of propaganda. Another was an improved technique for the selection of leaders. Since the leadership motif was played up to a

[1] Ladislas Farago (ed), *German Psychological Warfare* (New York· Committee for National Morale, 1941).

marked extent in the Hitlerian tradition, this effort was considered very important.

At this time the American psychologists were busy developing objective tests, but that was chiefly an "American hobby." The European psychologists, however, continued to do a great deal of work attempting to estimate subjective factors. In Germany this trend was indicated in the new methods for selection of Army Officers. Instead of depending upon objective measures, the Germans continued to depend heavily upon subjective estimates. It was in their search to make subjective estimates more reliable that they turned up the basic idea of the stress interview.

It was considered that courage, along with the ability and willingness to act to the limit of physical capacity, was more important in an officer than intellectual ability, and further, that these attributes could be estimated only from a study of the whole personality. Consequently, the Germans turned their attention to what has been called "expression analysis." One method was to take a close-up moving picture of a person's face while he was subjected to painful electric shocks. Or he might be asked a series of difficult questions or instructed to exert all the effort he could on an ergograph—an apparatus designed to measure work and fatigue. The facial expressions recorded were then compared to norms, and conclusions reached. This is probably the beginning of the stress interview. Another test included the stress element but introduced also the group interview approach. In this case a number of soldiers were placed under the command of a candidate, and he, under the observation of several examiners, had to explain some task to the men and carry it out with them. In some cases the candidate would be ordered to direct his men to put together a prefabricated bridge; in others, merely to assemble some simple object like a coat hanger from a piece of wire.

The theory of the stress interview is obvious in these cases. It is much more direct to give a man a painful electric shock and watch how he stands it, than to sit down in a bland interview and ask him how much current he believes he could

take without trying to jump out of his chair. In a similar way, it is a quite different thing to be given the task of managing the erection of a bridge with the help of ten soldiers assigned to the job, than it is to sit quietly with an interviewer and explain how one thinks he would accomplish such a task.

These methods of selecting officers were reported by Dr. Pyms Hopkins in 1939 in Occupational Psychology. It was not very long until the British, the Australians, and the Americans were examining the new technique. From these studies we now have a well developed theory, and some practice with both the stress interview and the group interview in business.

The best illustrations and examples of the stress interview, however, are still found in army practice. The following, taken from the work of the OSS Assessment Staff,[2] is the stress interview given to those who were being tried out for intelligence work.

The candidates were assembled at 6:15 A.M. and told they were going to be subjected to one of the most important tests of the whole program. They were each given an individual schedule that told them when to report to the test room. Here they found printed instructions that told them they were to consider that they had been discovered at 9:00 P.M. looking through some papers marked "Secret" in a government office in Washington. They had been caught by the night watchman, were under surveillance, and must develop a cover story to maintain their innocence. They were given twelve minutes to develop this story, and then were directed to a basement room. A voice told them to enter and directed them to sit under the glare of a spotlight. A group of shadowy figures in the background then attempted to draw out and break their story. Part of the time they were soothingly encouraged, but at any inconsistency they were sharply criticized and called "liar." They were not left at ease for a minute. The chair was uncomfortably upright. Every movement, slip of the tongue, or hesitating response was picked up by the examiner. They were continually criticized for the way they sat and told

to hold up their heads, cross their arms, keep their feet properly on the floor, and the like. Every word they said was subject to cross-examination, and the questioning shifted from one subject to another in as confusing a manner as possible. The candidates were forced to give precise information about dates, telephone numbers, and addresses while the examiner at every opportunity shrieked that now he had caught them, their stories didn't jibe, and they were obviously liars. At the conclusion of the main interview the applicants were told they had failed completely in the test, and then after a moment of observation of their reactions to this statement they were sent to another room, where the technique was reversed and they were made very much at ease. Here some one talked to them confidentially, asking them how everything was going and telling how he was pleased with their progress, in an effort, again, to break the subjects' stories.

This stress interview had been designed to measure emotional stability under strain, and in the opinion of the staff using it, the results were successful. A number of individuals whose case histories indicated they would be entirely satisfactory for the work proposed, broke down under the actual strain of the emotional stimuli.

The Business Use of the Stress Interview

Stress interviews have been used to some extent in business in the selection of traffic managers, salesmen, supervisors, and executives. It is well known that the time spent in educational institutions or the number of years of business experience is not always indicative of emotional maturity. Putting a man under the actual strain of embarrassment and criticism may reveal more in a few minutes about certain aspects of his personality than could be found in his past record.

The Stress Element.—The stress interview is not a highly standardized interview. Consequently, the only aspect of the stress interview requiring special attention is that of the nature of the stress employed; in its other aspects it will resemble

other interviews. The nature of the stress is dictated directly by the theory of the interview; it should duplicate as closely as possible the same kind of stress that is found on the job for which the person is being selected. In consequence, a police officer might have a blank cartridge fired at him; a salesman might be told that he doesn't know what he is talking about, that he is misrepresenting his goods, or that what he considers to be his best item can be secured elsewhere in a still better quality, and so on. An executive might be asked to work out some plan with the "aid" of a few assistants who hinder rather than help him.

Whatever the applicant does in response to the stress must be carefully observed and evaluated. It is an advantage for this reason to have more than one observer since a good deal may take place. Frequently, applying the stress has required more than one interviewer, so the extra observer will be there automatically. There is no rule, however, as to how many interviewers there should be, and the interview has been used with one as well as with more interviewers or observers. A rating scale with space for extra written comments may be used in the evaluation.

Advantages and Disadvantages of the Stress Interview.—
There is no doubt that the stress interview can work according to its theory; that is, put a man under strain that is similar to the job's strain and indicate reasonably well what he will do under these conditions. From this standpoint it is good, and it has received the general recommendation of men who have used it and reported their experience.

The disadvantage with the stress interview is that unless it is used with consummate skill it is hard on public relations. It is very difficult to embarrass a man or criticize him sharply in an interview, and then send him away a few minutes later as a friend of the company. The army does not have this problem in the same way it is found in business since the interviewee must stay in service for a little while, and any disturbance over a particular interview has time to wear off.

Because of the difficulty with public relations, the stress

interview has not been in wide use in business even though its theory and technique are clear and logical. There has usually been recourse to substitutes such as the stress question or questions in an otherwise relaxed interview, and the group and board interviews discussed later in this chapter, in which the stress is entirely social and enforced in such a natural, friendly way that it is often not even considered as stress and seldom causes hard feelings.

The Stress Question.—It is quite possible to use a little stress, for a particular purpose, and then return to bland questioning. There are some generally apathetic people, for instance, who do not seem able to show what they can do until put under some pressure. Every interviewer occasionally meets a person who answers everything with one or two words and cannot be persuaded to go further. Occasionally a little bit of stress, or challenge, will bring these people out. A statement by the interviewer such as, "I see, you don't understand this very well," will sometimes do it. "Don't try to explain this. I wouldn't want you to try and fail," may be all the stimulus a certain person needs. Some stress may be injected by a few questions in interviewing prospective salesmen, supervisors, and executives, after first building up friendly relations and if explanation and good will conclude the interview. But stress questions, just as the whole stress interview, require considerable care on the part of the interviewer. It seldom pays to get a little bit of information at the cost of a good deal of bad feeling. The use of stress calls for skill and experience in the interviewer and the soothing of any hurt feelings before the interview ends.

The Group and Board Interviews

The group and board interviews are those in which stress is obtained either by having a number of interviewees present at one time to discuss some appropriate topic among themselves or by having a number of interviewers, or observers, examine one interviewee. The stress applied, since it is always

social, differs in nature from that used in the simple stress interview. It springs, however, from the same philosophy. You cannot tell what a man will do in a stimulating situation unless you observe him in action under some strain. The stress of group and board interviews is all social and usually very pleasant. It is the stress of holding one's position in active participation with a group of one's peers. In consequence it does not raise any difficulties of creating or maintaining good will. In fact, one of the advantages of these interviews is that the interviews themselves tend to make for good feeling, satisfaction, and good will.

Since there are at least three kinds of group or board interviews possible, each with somewhat different characteristics, we had better examine them systematically. They are:

1. One interviewer and several interviewees
2. Several interviewers and several interviewees
3. Several interviewers and one interviewee

As terminology has not been standardized in this field, we will use the following terminology here for designating these interviews. The first listed above will be termed the "one interviewer group interview"; the second, the "group interview"; and the third, "board interview" or "group oral examination."

The One Interviewer Group Interview.—The situation in which one person interviews two or more interviewees interacting among themselves is theoretically sound and practical. The purpose of having more than one interviewee at a time is for the sole purpose of watching these individuals stimulate and attempt to control each other. The more completely the interviewer can disappear, the better it is from the standpoint of the freedom and lack of self-consciousness of the interviewees. The difficulty with such an interview, however, is that of observation. With apparatus that would record everything done and said such an interview is possible, but so far, such completely recorded interviews have not been used. It has been estimated that one interviewer can watch, at the

maximum, two interviewees. But if one interviewer alone observed a group of only two individuals, there would not be enough social stimulation to justify the procedure. We must therefore relegate the use of the one interviewer group interview to the future when improvements in recording may make it a practical procedure.

The Group Interview.—The practice of having several interviewers and several interviewees developed by slow stages from the observation of German officer candidates being examined under stress. The candidate was often asked to command a group of men and carry out some assignment under the observation of more than one examiner. The Australian and English Armies took the next step in the use of the so-called leaderless groups as a technique of selecting officers. A number of officer candidates were taken at one time and told that, because of one extraneous cause or another, the testing program would be interrupted for a short time. They were asked to do some detail work until the program could be resumed, and were given a task that was too difficult to be carried out by one or two men alone, but could be accomplished by a group—moving some telephone poles is an example. At the same time no leader, or foreman, was announced for the job.

Psychologists have known for some time that an active group always stratifies. Some individuals fall quickly into the positions of followers, helpers or commentators, or form a group of clowns or humorists. There is usually some competition for the more favorable positions, such as that of the leadership, in the group. So when a group of soldiers is told to accomplish some activity without a leader being assigned to them, it is not long before some leader "comes to the surface." This person is apt to be what is called a "natural leader." Since he has no credentials, he must win the acceptance of the group and cannot be put in place merely by an external influence.

As these leaderless groups carried out their assignments they were carefully watched, not only to observe and identify

the emergent leader, but, if possible, to establish some criterion of what is required in a leader. It was this situation, then, that was the antecedent of the group interview.

The theory of observing several applicants in a group is the same as that applied in the selecting of officers from a leaderless group. It is the view that if the group is activated, it will stratify. Or to say this another way, if the group is given something to do (in the interview this is to discuss a live topic), the individuals of the group will compete with each other for the more favored positions. With an adequate number of interviewers observing and recording what they see the interviewees do, it should be possible for them to determine a person's qualifications for a supervisor's or executive's position reasonably well.

If there is to be one observer for every interviewee, which is optimum, or even one observer to two interviewees, which is considered minimum, this will be a somewhat expensive interview. The implication is, consequently, that the group interview will be used only when the position to be filled is important enough to justify the expense. This, of course, excludes all screening interviews and the usual run of employment interviewing for the lower grades of worker. The group selection procedure has been recommended for such positions as that of production manager, accountant, management trainee, salesman, engineer, and foreman.

Usually in such interviews, the technical requirements of the job have been determined by some other means, so that what is looked for is only personality and social influence. The interviewee is watched to determine, not his knowledge or intellectual brilliance, but how he affects the other members of the group and is affected by them.

The group interview method of selecting employees, although it is being used to some extent in the United States, has been more widely used in England during recent years. An example given by John Munro Fraser will illustrate its use.[3]

[3] John Munro Fraser, "The Group Method of Selecting Executives," Personnel, XXVI, No 1 (1949), 50-55.

The position to be filled called for an experienced engineer with sufficient imagination to design new machines or adapt old ones and to mechanize processes previously hand performed. There were eight interviewees, and four interviewers; a psychologist, the managing director of the firm, the chief engineer, and the factory manager. The procedure was divided into ten steps·

1. The applicants were welcomed by the managing director.
2. The applicants were tested by the psychologist.
3. The applicants were interviewed individually by the psychologist, the managing director, and the chief engineer.
4. During the interviews, the men were taken, in two groups, through the plant by the factory manager. One particular process was pointed out to the men, and they were told they would be asked later to discuss it and suggest means of improving it.
5. The applicants were taken out to dinner by the four interviewers and observed in an informal social situation.
6. After dinner the table was cleared and the interviewers retired to the corners of the room. The candidates were invited to discuss the topic: "Productivity in the United Kingdom Industry, whether it was at a satisfactory level, or how it could be improved." (This is the group interview proper)

During this discussion the four interviewers observed the participants and made note that: (a) Some candidates were more successful in dealing with the situation than were the others; (b) some made their points well; (c) some seized the right moment to express themselves; (d) some used good techniques to gain favorable attention—urgency when called for, or humor; (e) some expressed themselves poorly and failed to gain support for their views; (f) some failed to carry the group with them; and (g) some aroused opposition and antagonism.

7. After the group interview, a conference was held by the four interviewers, and each applicant was thoroughly discussed.

8. The candidates assembled in the morning and were given a practical problem. This problem was the one that had been suggested to them on the previous day when they toured the plant. Some of the men had prepared for this and the session started quickly. Different levels of technical ability were displayed. Some could hold their own against criticism, others could not. Some showed much more resourcefulness than others.

9. The above process was stopped, and the candidates were invited to give their opinions on the selection procedure in which they had been participating. They were asked particularly if they had, individually, been given a fair opportunity to display their abilities.

10. The interviewers had a final conference, and the successful candidate was selected.

The Procedures of the Group Interview.—The necessary procedures of the group interview are indicated in the illustration. They can be stated more specifically as follows:

Obtain a Room. The room for a group interview should be arranged so that the interviewees sit together in the middle of the room, usually around a table. It is better if the layout of the room is such that the table does not have an obvious "head" or "foot." In case the head or foot of the table is obvious by its position, no candidate should have these places. A round table is preferable.

It is best if the observers are seated around the walls of the room. They should be close enough to see and hear everything that takes place, but far enough away to avoid interfering with the discussion of the interviewees. It has been suggested that the observers be placed behind a one-way glass so that they can see but not be seen, but there is no record of any company doing enough of this type of interviewing to have call for such special equipment. It is considered good practice for the interviewers to be able to move at least once during the interview so that they can watch interviewees previously turned away from them, or not clearly seen.

The interviewees should not be disturbed during their dis-

cussion by any business interruptions. The observers should not be subject to call under any circumstances while the interview goes on, and the sounds of operating machines should not interfere with easy hearing. Because of these requirements, some companies have their group interviews in the evening, or in the small banquet room of a local hotel. In any event, the room should be comfortable with an informal atmosphere.

Assign Time for the Interview. It requires time to develop the social interactions of a group interview, and too much time is a strain on the attention of the observers. It has been said that less than an hour's interviewing is too little to bring out all the factors that this kind of a situation is capable of bringing out. More than two hours is too long for sharp observation and adequate recording of what takes place. One and one-half hours is just about right.

The time element has been examined also from the standpoint of the individual participants.[4] It has been argued that the group interview can be shorter per person than the individual interview since the "beginning" and the "end" of the interview are executed only once for the whole group. They all adjust to the situation and settle down to the discussion together, and the end of the interview comes to all at the same time. The stress element also tends to promote a quicker display of characteristics. This is, in fact, the basic reason for the use of the group interview technique. The greater stimulation leads to more response and to more unguarded responses which delineate the personalities of the applicants. In a high stimulating situation, attention cannot be given to every response, so the applicants respond in many ways by automatic habit mechanisms as well as by argument. About fifteen minutes per applicant has been suggested as an adequate time for the group interview.

If each applicant is to be given fifteen minutes, and an hour and a half is the optimum total time, the optimum num-

[4] Harold Fields, "An Analysis of the use of the Group Oral Interview," *Personnel,* XXVII, No. 6 (1951), 480-87.

ber of interviewees would be six. This agrees rather well with the results of practice; from six to eight applicants appear to have been the number most frequently interviewed at one time.

Choosing a Chairman. Quite a little experimentation has been carried on in regard to the question of choosing a chairman. The possibilities are (1) to use the leaderless group technique and not assign anyone as chairman, (2) to appoint a chairman from the group or have the group elect one, (3) to have a company executive sit as chairman, (4) to obtain a neutral "moderator." There are several considerations governing the choice of procedure.

The leaderless group technique has been used and has given some satisfaction, but it has been found that it may operate too slowly for a single group discussion. Time may be lost at the beginning while the interviewees feel their way into the situation. Sometimes two possible leaders contend with each other, using more group time than the importance of their contention justifies. These difficulties have been satisfied, some say, by giving the group very specific directions. The approved instructions state that the applicants will be judged both by what they do themselves, and by the accomplishment of the group as a whole. In consequence, each are urged neither to lead the group off into some by-way of the problem nor to allow any of the other applicants to do so. With such directions, the leaderless group technique may work well; certainly when one person does emerge as group leader under these conditions the evidence is relatively convincing.

The experiment of having the group elect a chairman or appointing one from the group has not worked out too well. It presents two major difficulties. The first is that it is impossible to make one of the candidates chairman, by any method, without giving that person a marked advantage and destroying the basic justice and fair play of the interview. The second factor is that the selected chairman may be a poor one, and the whole interview upset through inferior techniques.

If the company has an experienced conference leader, he may become the interview chairman. This procedure has the one difficulty that it puts company authority right into the center of the group discussion and may hamper it. One purpose of the group interview is to put the applicants together, without outside influences of any kind operating on them, and let the inherent ability of each determine the position in the group. The leadership of a company chairman violates this principle.

The use of an outside moderator when one is available seems to be the preferred method. If an experienced impartial chairman can be obtained, a great deal can be done for the whole procedure. A notice to the applicants for advanced positions given by the Examining Board of New York [5] explains the functions of the moderator.

> When you enter the examination room, you will find someone seated at the head of the table who is not an applicant nor an examiner in this examination. You are not to request his name. His function at the table is, as occasion may require, to pose questions or offer recommendations that in his judgment are related to the topic, or that are logical outcomes of the discussion to the group as a whole or to some one participant. In other words, he neither serves as chairman of the panel nor as contributor to the discussion. He is there to pitch ball, if necessary, not to bat it.

Picking the Question for Discussion. It is desirable that the question put up for discussion be related in some way to the job for which the applicants are applying. But more important than its job relevance is the requirement that it be a question which will arouse argument. The more animated the discussion becomes the more surely will the observers be able to find the discriminating evidence they want. In consequence, a topic is sometimes taken that has little job significance but has enough argumentative value—if it affords more than one solution or offers more than one applicant an opportunity to find a right solution. A question that has a

Ibid, p 483.

variety of angles to it, moreover, allows different members of the group to demonstrate different approaches. Any effort expended in choosing a good question will be repaid in the interview.

Listening, Rating, and Evaluating. In the group interview, several tasks usually carried by the interviewer are put on the shoulders of the interviewees. It is the task of the interviewees to establish good person-to-person relationships, to orient themselves further in the problem, to communicate, and to use good judgment. The interviewer merely observes whether they have done these things.

In the matter of orientation there is some possibility that one or another of the candidates could be given the advantage if the group has in any way been given advance notice of what is expected of them, or if, in some way unknown to the interviewers, the question put out for discussion favors one of them. It is recommended that the interviewees be told exactly how they will be judged and instructed to speak loudly enough to be heard by the observers. The orientation of all the participants must be equal when the interview starts if the group interview is to operate justly.

The interviewers or observers have nothing to do in the group interview but to watch carefully everything that goes on and record their observations. In some cases, each observer is assigned one or, at the most, two interviewees and is expected to record significant statements by them and observations about them; of course, he observes them all insofar as he can. The observer is not there to ask questions nor to take part in the discussion; if he does at any time make a suggestion or ask a question he intrudes upon the group as little as he can and only in order to "get things going."

When the time is up, each observer should first rate the participants by himself. When these ratings have been made, the observers get together and discuss whatever differences they find in their ratings. It is always best to have the individual ratings made out before the discussion starts; otherwise the raters are apt to be influenced by each other, often

in the direction of the observer with the greatest prestige. If possible, the influence of prestige should be prevented from having too much influence on the observers. One way to do this is to call for individual written ratings before any discussion takes place. Although the usual type of rating scales are used, they often are made up for a particular interview and call for ratings on characteristics that are important to a particular job.

Advantages and Disadvantages of the Group Interview.— Following are some of the factors that must be taken into account in considering the use of the group interview.

1. The group interview builds up a social-stress situation which calls out responses from the interviewees that are more tense and, therefore, less guarded about some things than usual. This provides a revealing opportunity for the observers who watch the course of the interview.

2. The pressure involved in the situation shows up the individuals who have little self control. To remain perfectly cool and self-possessed in a group interview, and still take active part in it, is at least one indication of good emotional adjustment.

3. An individual's tendency to self-consciousness is brought to the surface. Under the double stress of group discussion and interviewer observation, some people become inhibited and withdraw, whereas others become dramatic and exhibitionist.

4. The quality of a person's voice and his ability in public speaking are brought out.

5. The group interview is obviously competitive, and the person who is more socially aggressive is very quickly in the lime light.

6. As this type of interview is usually a new experience to the participants, it displays their ability to adjust promptly to a new situation.

7. Some people are liked better for their attitudes and techniques than others. The group interview indicates rather quickly how well a person can get along with the kind of

people that are in the group. The observers can usually see if a particular individual is not cordially accepted.

8. As the reactions of such a group usually move along at a reasonably rapid pace, it is possible to watch an individual and see if he "keeps up." Has he any feeling for the exchange of ideas going on, and does he recognize the different attitudes of various ones in the group? Some applicants come out of such a discussion much the same as when they went in, without, apparently, having received any new impressions.

9. The type of thinking used by an individual can be examined. Some people use a lot of words, some express themselves with only a few. Some depend heavily on analogies and comparisons, some are more apt to use a cause and effect approach. Some are simply dogmatic and refer to their own opinions or experience as authority.

10. As the group works toward a more or less universal agreement on one or another aspect of the problem, there is often an opportunity to observe a participant's eagerness to agree, or determination to be original in his thinking. Sometimes a person is so anxious to agree or disagree that wide gaps are left in his reasoning.

11. The psychologist or personnel man is put in proper perspective. He arranges the display of the candidates' abilities, but those who must take the responsibility for the appointment make the decision. (This assumes that company executives are among the observers, and make up their own minds as to whether they wish to employ any of the applicants or not.)

12. The group interview does not call for any skill in questioning on the part of the interviewer, and consequently he can give all of his attention to observing. If the observer has not had any special training in using rating scales or evaluating people, he must be given this training.

13. Participants in a group interview often enjoy the procedure and say they "get something out of it" as an experience, even when they were not selected for the job. This is an important element of good will.

The group interview has been criticized as being: (1) too competitive, (2) too verbal, (3) unrepresentative of what takes place on the job, and, finally, (4) never thoroughly validated.

It may be stated, however, that the group interview is truly competitive. The applicants have their competitors before them in person, and sometimes there is a good deal at stake. This competitive element can be limited, however, by a skillful moderator, or by arranging that each interviewee speak for several minutes at least once during the interview. This latter technique, however, tends to formalize the interview and detract from its spontaneity. Another frequently used solution is the simple one of telling the applicants that an executive's work is competitive and that there is no better place than this interview to find out if a man can hold his own.

The criticism that the group interview is predominantly verbal is valid to a certain extent. Experience indicates that group judgment has tended to favor the individuals who did the most talking. An executive's work, however, requires mastery of the verbal element too. In cases where the job involved does not require much verbal ability, it is possible that the emphasis on talking well is overstressed in the group interview. Executive work is complex, and some executives are not particularly good talkers. Candidates whose verbal ability is not equal to their other abilities will be handicapped to some extent in the group interview.

The argument that the group situation is not precisely like the job situation is also true, but no more true of the group interview than of all selective situations. This criticism, however, should make the observers cautious in their judgments.

And finally, it must be admitted that the group interview has not been validated to any great extent. Individuals selected by the group interview have been successful in many cases, and forty-four agencies in the United States that had used the method replied in an investigation by Harold Fields [6] that they intended to continue its use. But no exhaustive

* Ibid., p. 481.

validation has been reported where the group interview was held and the relative success of interview accomplishment compared with actual accomplishment on the job.

The weight of evidence recommends the group interview for cautious use in situations to which it is suited. There may be reason, however, to use individual interviews as well (as in the English usage), particularly since the two types of interview are said to complement rather than duplicate each other.

The Board Interview.—The board interview is another kind of stress interview. In this case, the stress is applied to one interviewee sitting down with a group of examiners. The purpose is to determine personality characteristics that cannot be brought to light in a written examination. Few people can sit with a group of interviewers or examiners without experiencing considerable tension. This tension brings out more impulsive reactions and tends to promote a more pronounced display of the personality than occurs in relaxed situations. The interviewers are not there, however, merely to create stress, but also to observe and examine the applicant from different points of view.

The board interview is sometimes called an oral examination, and whether it is more properly an examination or an interview seems to be a moot question. One way of making a distinction is that if predetermined standards are used and an emphasis is placed on questioning, it is a test. If there is more informality with a greater emphasis on the human element, and the applicant is allowed a good deal of the time to talk of anything he sees fit, thus displaying himself in his own way, it is an interview. In business, where our interest lies, the more informal usage is the common one.

Board interviews might be said to be derived from the oral examination, with a little of the "stress philosophy" added.

Oral examinations represent a procedure that is almost as old as the individual interview. Universities have made great use of the technique in examining candidates for advanced degrees. There is hardly anyone in the United States who

holds a Ph.D. degree who did not pass an oral examination in the process of getting it. The Civil Service has been using the group oral examination for a long time and has spent considerable effort in improving it. The Civil Service Administration considers this interview primarily as an examination and places heavy emphasis on the nature of the evidence that may be gathered.[7]

In recent years, the more informal board interview has come into wider use and aroused considerable interest, as indicated by its use in the United States Army in appointing 25,000 officers to permanent posts.[8] It is also being used in business in the selection of executives and advanced personnel.

The Procedures of the Board Interview.—Following is the procedure suggested for the board interview:

The Room. The principal requirements of the room are quiet and good lighting. The applicant should not be seated facing a row of examiners, but all should sit around a table, preferably a round table.

The Time. The best time limits for a board interview appear to be from 20 to 45 minutes, but the interview should not end till all the interviewers are satisfied.

The Chairman. The board interview should have an experienced chairman. He should see that the interview remains on more or less relevant ground, that bits of evidence turned up should be properly examined, that no area of questioning is overlooked, that none of the individual interviewers take too much of the total time, and that each interviewer has an opportunity to ask some questions.

The Interviewers. The number of interviewers should be at least three and not more than seven if each is to take an active part. If there are only two interviewers, they may fall into marked differences of opinion. If there are many, the

[7] Samuel H Ordway, Jr., "Oral Tests in Public Service," *Civil Service Assembly of the United States and Canada* (Chicago, 1943), pp 40-60
[8] John F. Mee, (ed), *Personnel Handbook* (New York The Ronald Press Co., 1951), p 455.

cost is increased and the actual participation of each is decreased. Five seems to be a good number, and each should preferably represent different kinds of experience and different points of view. The characteristics to be looked for in a good board interviewer are: intelligence, good verbal ability, logical thinking—preferably with some knowledge of the nature of evidence, job knowledge, the ability to inspire confidence in all types of people, openmindedness—a lack of prejudice or impulsiveness, ability to keep good records, and a good knowledge of human nature.

The Questions.—The questions, similar to those in an individual job placement examination, will particularly apply to the job being applied for. As in the case of any good interview, however, they may go into family history, social history, economic history, or any area that promises to display particular facets of the individual's personality.

A frequent practice in business is to put a man pretty much on his own in selecting his material and in presenting it to the board. He is often allowed to "sell himself" as he sees fit. In such cases the board of interviewers may ask comparatively few questions, spending most of the time observing and evaluating, as in the group interview. Occasionally this interview may make direct use of an ulterior stress element.

In the case of Civil Service board interviews or tests, great emphasis is placed on analyzing the job into elements, determining the education, experience, skill, or personal adaptability required to satisfy the job elements. The interview evidence that can be brought to bear on these necessary elements is considered. The examiners are instructed very carefully in the rules of evidence with special reference to the interview situation.

Ratings.—Following the interview, the candidate is rated individually by all interviewers. Occasionally a check list of personality characteristics is added to the rating form (see Fig. 17). Finally, all the separate interview ratings are brought together in a discussion or conference, and the board's decision is made.

DIRECTIONS FOR THE BOARD (COMMITTEE) INTERVIEW

Work Sheet I

On this sheet you are to record your opinion of the applicant The important consideration is *how he impresses you* Record your own personal feeling about him The sheet may be filled out during or after the interview, but if done during the interview it should not be more noticeable than necessary Under no condition should the applicant be made uncomfortably aware of what you are doing

Below is a list of things to be observed and rated After each item in the list are three letters in boxes If the candidate impresses you favorably, blacken the F box, if he impresses you unfavorably, blacken the U box, if he more or less "leaves you cold," you are neither favor ably nor unfavorably impressed, blacken the I box

NOTE   The letters are not in the same order after each item, they are deliberately placed in different orders to cause you to think carefully about each item before you record your impression Only one box will be blackened after each item

REMEMBER
If he impresses you favorably, blacken the F
If he impresses you unfavorably, blacken the U
If you are indifferent toward him, blacken the I

1 How the applicant *looks*, notice features, posture build, dress, carriage, general appearance, etc   ▨Ⓤ① / Ⓕ▨①

2 Applicant s *expression* study his grimaces, responsive ness facial movements, ties frowns, etc   ⒻⓊ①

3 His *gestures* observe smoothness, posture, too many or too exaggerated too few, easy, restrained etc   Ⓕ①ⓤ

4 *Voice* note pitch, loudness, resonance, defects, affec tations slurring etc   ⓊⒻ① / ⒻⓊ①

FIG 17—Excerpts from Directions for Conducting a Board Interview (Richardson Bellows Henry & Co)

DIRECTIONS FOR THE BOARD (COMMITTEE) INTERVIEW

WORK SHEET II

Make a check ($\sqrt{}$) before each word which you think is descriptive of the applicant. Make a double check ($\sqrt{}\sqrt{}$) before the half dozen or so most descriptive terms.

Double check at least six terms. You may have more if you wish.

___Amiable	___Eloquent	___Mature
___Awkward	___Exaggerated	___Neat
___Average	___Evasive	___Nasty
___Animated	___Excitable	___Normal looking
___Attractive	___Enthusiastic	___Nimble
___Ambiguous	___Effective	___Natural
___Artificial	___Easy going	___Odd
___Apathetic	___Flabby	___Respectful
___Anxious	___Forceful	___Retiring
___Argumentative	___Flattering	___Resourceful
___Appeasing	___Frank	___Resolute
___Aggressive	___Fluent	___Superficial
___Alert	___Firm	___Shy
___Analytical	___Fearful	___Sissified
___Assured	___Flustered	___Sensible
___Arbitrary	___Inventive	___Sociable
___Blunt	___Insecure	___Sluggish
___Brilliant	___Impulsive	___Stubborn
___Bluffer	___Indifferent	___Suspicious
___Bewildered	___Imaginative	___Satisfied
___Bored	___Inelastic	___Self centered
___Broadminded	___Investigative	___Swaggering
___Cockey	___Jerky	___Spontaneous
___Direct	___Jargony	___Sing songy
___Dull	___Keen	___Slow
___Deliberate	___Listless	___Screw ball
___Determined	___Lively	___Slipshod
___Definite	___Laborious	___Smoothie
___Eccentric	___Meek	___Stilted
___Exact	___Mannish	___Tactful
___Effeminate	___Methodical	

FIG. 17.—Continued.

It is always necessary to be careful that unusual prestige on the part of one of the interviewers does not bias the ratings given by the others. A good method is for the chairman to start the discussion in a reverse-prestige order. In that way, if there are any of lower standing than others among the interviewers, they will have given uninhibited expression to their opinon.

Some Advantages and Disadvantages of the Board Interview.—The board interview applies social stress in a way which does not arouse ill will and which helps to display personality characteristics that are difficult to measure. A number of experienced observers make the decision, among whom may be those who will be responsible for the candidate if he is put on the job. Different points of view are brought to bear in evaluating the candidate. The importance of the candidate is acknowledged in that he is interviewed by a number of important people. This last element often builds good will, even in the rejected.

The primary difficulty with the board interview is its expense, since it calls for a number of influential people to examine one interviewee. But this factor can be more than compensated for if better men are selected for important jobs. Occasionally, differences of opinion among the observers on the importance of some topic or evidence may detract from the evaluation of a particular applicant. Differing prestige among the interviewers may also pose a problem.

In this chapter we have examined various kinds of stress that can be applied to applicants, and the problem of observing and recording what is done by the interviewees under these circumstances. The techniques have been used primarily to draw out personality characteristics in applicants for jobs of considerable importance, and will usually be used by interviewers who already have considerable experience. This whole area represents a field of recent interest and new development. It may become much more important in the future.

Chapter 18

FOLLOW-UP, TRANSFER, PROMOTION, AND MERIT-RATING INTERVIEWS

Although they serve the purposes of acquiring information on employee attitudes and building good will, the major emphasis in the follow-up, the transfer, the promotion, and the merit-rating interviews is on improving the orientation of the employee.

Orientation, as we have seen, is the process of organizing the mind toward a certain objective so that incidents and requirements are understood and fall into a proper perspective. A new employee should be so oriented that, with a sound evaluation of his various abilities, he sees himself as an integral part of a friendly business organization. This cannot be done dogmatically or directively by the company alone, but it can be done cooperatively. The objective might be broken down and its parts enumerated as follows:

1. The worker should believe that the company is honest, substantial, fair, and friendly.
2. He should know something of the company's products and how they are marketed. This information should be presented so that the employee will understand his part in the scheme of production and the importance of his job.
3. He should be made to feel that his supervisor was glad to get him into his department and that the other workers welcome him. It should be clear that he is being treated as a person, not just given the place of a new tool.
4. He must recognize that he was not just "tossed in the basket," but fitted to work that he can do and in which he can feel secure.

5 He should be given the ratings made of him so that he may
know what the company thinks his strong and weak points
are so that he may improve himself.

6. He should know something of the company's history, its
rules, customs, and employee requirements.

7. He should understand the wage rates, opportunities for
advancement, and something of the various employee
benefits.

8. He should feel that from the day he came to work he re-
ceived all the help he needed to understand his new situa-
tion and what was expected of him.

Many companies have very complete orientation programs
and use a variety of techniques in addition to the interview.[1]
The hiring process begins the orientation and group sessions
of new employees may follow. Other devices used are hand-
books, the employee magazine, plant tours, motion pictures,
letters from the executives, and special courtesies.

The Follow-up Interview

Generally, the follow-up interview is used when there is
close co-operation between the personnel department and the
various operating departments. Many larger concerns have
some kind of printed report to be filled out by the department
head. In smaller concerns, those of about two or three hun-
dred employees, the personnel department will inquire orally
of the department head about the ability of the new worker
to get along with his fellow employees, his grasp of the work,
the quality and quantity of his production, and his general
attitude on the job, and will ask for any constructive criticisms
that should be offered to him. Some concerns make this eval-
uation after a week's time while others wait for a period of
one to three months.

Upon receipt of the department head's evaluation, the per-
sonnel department will call in the new employee and ask in

[1] See Policyholders Service Bureau, *Orienting the New Worker* (New York:
Metropolitan Life Insurance Company, 1949).

a friendly way how he likes the work, whether he understands why he is doing certain things, and whether he can see how his job ties in with production as a whole. Much encouragement can be given the employee at this time for he can be advised, usually, that he has served his probationary period. When this is the case, the employee may then be told of particular benefits, such as group insurance, accident, health, and surgical coverage, paid vacations, and payment during illness. Moreover, constructive criticism can be given if the employee is not progressing as he should.

Interviews of this kind give the employment interviewer an insight into the soundness of his judgment in hiring. Also, through such interviews he can learn the more detailed steps of the various jobs as well as the effectiveness of the orientation provided by the department supervisors. At the same time, the interviewer can accumulate certain company information regarding attitudes and working conditions. Let us examine each of these factors in more detail.

Checking Employment Judgment.—The follow-up interviewer should preferably be the same person who employed the new man. The employment interviewer is the one who knows most about the new employee and also the one who should be the most interested in finding out if that man is making good, or in what way he is falling down on the job.

Before he calls the new man in, or goes to see him, the interviewer should refresh his mind with regard to the worker's employment interview. What estimate did he make then? What sort of description did he give the new man of his department and the company? Did he have any doubts in mind regarding the new employee? What were they? If the new man has not succeeded on the job, the interviewer should find out, as the follow-up interview progresses, if the failure was a result of bad employment judgment on his part, or a misunderstanding of the nature of the work on the part of the employee at the time he was employed.

If a new employee is spoiling an employment interviewer's record by failing, the interviewer must be careful not to "take

it out on the man," but to look objectively for the reasons why. In return for all the information he is getting to improve his employment judgment, the interviewer should help the new employee with friendly explanations of anything that disturbs him.

Learning More About the Job Descriptions.—Follow-up interviews also afford an excellent opportunity to the employment interviewer to learn more about the job descriptions he has been receiving. From this point of view it is better to hold the follow-up interview on the job, or near it, if it can be done without interfering with production. In such cases the interviewer makes another contact with the foreman and can check on any technical language he did not understand in the job descriptions. He can look at tools, machines, and materials with the new employee and so increase his understanding of working conditions and the whole job set-up.

Whether the follow-up interview is held on the job or in the personnel office, the interviewer should look over the job description before the interview and see if he has any questions about it that he would like to ask the new man. He can ask the new employee whether the job was properly described to him in the employment interview and what contrasts to that description he has noticed. When a man was employed because of similar previous experience, he can be asked to compare, or contrast, his new job with his old one. By asking these questions the interviewer can bring out a friendly response on the part of the new employee, and at the same time increase his own understanding of the jobs. It will be of particular value to the interviewer to learn of any tasks which the new man feels are very difficult, not logically connected with his other work, or for which he is improperly supplied with materials and tools.

In case the interview has been held in the personnel office, the interviewer can sometimes make the foreman and job contact by walking with the interviewee back to his job, and spending a few minutes discussing the employee's work near the place it is carried on.

Orientation in the Follow-up Interview.—The interviewer must always remember that it is the new employee who is being oriented and that orientation requires the organization of the employee's, not the interviewer's mind. It is impossible to organize a set of ideas that do not exist, so the interviewer must find out what the new man has learned about the company, his associates, the foreman, the working conditions, and the surrounding community. The interviewer will no doubt want to contribute information of his own, but since the employee's mind is quite a well developed complex of ideas by the time he goes to work, the interviewer's contribution must be "fitted in." As he talks with the new employee the interviewer will be on his guard to see whether the new man has gotten correct knowledge from good sources or whether he has been fed on mistaken employee rumors. Has he been led to believe that he is working for a "family corporation" where he will find little chance of promotion? Or has he placed an emphasis on being friendly with his associates at the expense of his work?

The new man needs to be oriented, not only in regard to the company, how it operates and what it expects of its employees in general, but also in regard to himself as a member of this new group. He will want to know what kind of impression he has made, what the foreman thinks of him, how the others like him. If he has any particular weakness that he can correct or if there are any particular aspects of his job that he has neglected because he has not understood their importance, he will want to be told these things. Any honest praise that can be given the man at this time will bring much higher returns than it will after he is a more seasoned employee. In the beginning, he is sure to be more sensitive to either praise or reproof than later on when he feels more secure. His mind now is receptive; it is a particularly good time to awaken in him a friendly and co-operative company attitude. In fact, one of the principal features of the follow-up interview should be building of morale. When the new employee is still a little bit alone, company friendliness goes much further and seems more worth-while than after he has made

fnends of his own In consequence the interviewer does well to emphasize friendliness and good will.

Accumulating Company Information in the Follow-up Interview.—The follow-up interview also provides an excellent opportunity for the interviewer to gather information on employee attitudes and working conditions. Since the employee is new and does not yet consider himself an accepted member of the group, he may be at this time more willing to talk than later. If he has found any restriction on output, any informal but controlling group among the employees, or any other factor that he does not approve of, or that differs from his previous jobs, he may be willing to speak to the interviewer about them.

It has been noted that if someone goes into a railway coach or concert hall and looks over the people, they tend to appear more "queer," grotesque, and misformed than do his folks at home. Familiarity breeds acceptance even more often than it breeds contempt. So the new worker may often be aware of many factors in working conditions and employee attitudes that the older worker has accepted and "forgotten." In consequence, the follow-up interview provides an opportunity that should not be missed to look at the company, its operations, and its employees from the fresh viewpoint of a new employee.

It is not only new men, however, who are accorded follow-up interviews. Whenever there is any change in the status of an employee a follow-up interview may be called for. The following recorded interview illustrates how important information may be brought out by this procedure. This interview is with an employee who had been formerly a time-study man in the Feeder Division and had been transferred to the job of polisher. After the introductory civilities, the interview continued as follows:

INTERVIEWER: Well, in case you wonder what this is all about, I'll just say that I am working with Mr. Avery (Supervisor of Industrial Relations) on a study of personnel problems connected with lay off. One of the leads we are following up has

to do with the temporary transfer of salaried employees to productive occupations. According to the records, you have had to adjust yourself to this difficult situation, and I wonder if you would be willing to give me the benefit of your experience?

EMPLOYEE: I'll be glad to. What do you want to know?

INTERVIEWER: Oh, I'd like to get a picture of the whole situation: when and how the transfer was made, what your feelings were to the change, and how the workers received you when you joined the group?

EMPLOYEE: I see. Well, this is the story. I used to be time-study man in the Feeder Division. About May the foreman of time-study came and told me that he had to reduce his force in order to adjust his budget. He suggested that I take a temporary transfer as a polisher, but somehow I didn't like to.

INTERVIEWER: Why not?

EMPLOYEE: Well, I might just as well tell you. I didn't like to because my father happens to be group leader of the polishing section, and the other employees would naturally say the transfer was favoritism. So I asked the foreman whether he couldn't put me somewhere else. He saw my difficulty and found a place for me as a lathe operator. But the union opposed this transfer because I had not come out of that group and insisted on my being taken out. So what could I do? There was nothing for it but to take the job as polisher, even though it is not a good thing to work under your father.

INTERVIEWER: How did the group feel about your coming?

EMPLOYEE: They didn't want to have me. Two men, especially (one of them the shop steward), did all they could to keep me out. The shop steward had a little less service than I, and he may have been afraid that if any more men were laid off he would be the next to go.

INTERVIEWER: How did you know they didn't want you?

EMPLOYEE: There was a lot of kidding. They would say, "I hope you can make standard time, because if you can't, it's curtains for you." There were a lot of remarks like that and you could tell they didn't want me. It's hard to put your finger on it, but deep in my heart I knew they didn't like to have me in

the group. That's the sort of thing you have to expect as a
time-study man.

INTERVIEWER: Is that so? Do you think that coming from time-
study made it harder for you?

EMPLOYEE: Oh, sure. They couldn't have any other reason. After
all, before I took up time-study, I was a member of the union
myself and had many friends there. I only resigned when I
went to work in the time-study department. You know, all
time-study men drop out; the union doesn't even like to have
them in the organization. So, their objection to me must
have been because I came from time-study. As a matter of
fact, another time-study man had a hell of a time. They held
up his work and made things hard for him every way they
could. I suppose that's where I was lucky to have my father as
group leader. They didn't dare to carry things too far. He
saw to it that the work was assigned fairly.

INTERVIEWER: Well, that was one break, anyway.

EMPLOYEE: You said it. But then, I was pretty well placed any-
way. You see, I was put on a machine job where each worker
does his own part, and the work just flows through. When
the kind of work was changed, we just moved from one ma-
chine to the other. But even then, we were not really de-
pendent on each other. By just sticking to my job I found I
got along all right after a while.

INTERVIEWER: How did you get along with the men during lunch
time?

EMPLOYEE: Oh, there wasn't any trouble about that. Of course,
I don't know what they said to each other, because I didn't as-
sociate much with my shop mates. I used to come to the
office and talk to the other time-study men. That was one of
the ways I kept up my contacts.

INTERVIEWER: How did they feel about these transfers?

EMPLOYEE: Naturally they don't like them. You've got to look
at it this way. Time-study men have a certain pride. They've
spent a lot of time and energy in reducing costs, and naturally
feel that management is not justified in putting them back on
check whenever work is low. We have saved the company so

much money that there ought to be more than enough to carry us for a month or so. We feel that the company is obligated. Going back to the bench puts you into a peculiar frame of mind and naturally makes you feel discouraged. For instance, it means you have to come to work in ordinary working clothes. This kind of hurts your pride.

INTERVIEWER: Did the time-study men ever make any remarks about your working clothes?

EMPLOYEE: No, they didn't. They really were swell about that. They never once said anything about my being dressed differently.

INTERVIEWER: That was considerate of them.

EMPLOYEE: It certainly was and helped a lot.

INTERVIEWER: What other things did you run up against?

EMPLOYEE: Well, there was the matter of different working hours. When we were on salary we worked from 8:15 to 5:00. This gave me time to have breakfast with the children and get to know them a bit. Now, I work from 6:15 to 2:00, and, of course don't get to see the children in the morning. Naturally they wonder why I'm not home for breakfast anymore. My eldest son (he's nine years old) remarked on the change in hours. "Why does Daddy have to go earlier to the office than he used to?" Of course, it's easy to put them off, and of course they're glad to find me back when they come home from school. Getting out earlier has another advantage. The children never see me in my working clothes. I have always changed by the time they're back.

There are a lot of things like that you have to think of. Naturally, we couldn't afford to go on a vacation. But I must hand it to the wife; she handled this very nicely by taking the children on short overnight trips to friends and relatives. So that was all right. After all, the main thing is that I am not out of work. It would have been too bad if I'd had to stay out altogether.

INTERVIEWER: That's true.

EMPLOYEE: Well, I guess that's all.

INTERVIEWER: Just one more question. Did you find it difficult to go back to the machine?

EMPLOYEE: I'll say I did. It wasn't easy. You know what I mean? Your hands are soft, and it takes a while to get your hand in again. But that's not the worst of it. As far as the work goes you can get used to anything. Here's something that bothers me and as a matter of fact it's the real trouble. When they put me back on check, I figured there must be something wrong with me. If I had been an outstanding man, they would have kept me in the department. So I keep asking myself what my faults are. Naturally, if I can, I want to improve myself so this won't happen again. That's why I'm now taking a correspondence course on industrial management from the La Salle Institute. And I begin to see some of my weaknesses. One fault I had was that I couldn't see the other fellow's side. But I've changed a lot in that. I've learned you can't handle men unless you explain to them and make them feel important. And I've got to learn how to handle men because I don't want to be set back again. You know a man can't help feeling that, if he's been dropped once, he's more likely to be dropped again. Management may think, "He'll take it easier next time."

INTERVIEWER: Let's hope that won't happen. You certainly deserve a lot of credit for not letting it get you down.

EMPLOYEE: Oh, well, there's no use in getting discouraged. I'm glad we had this talk and that the Company shows an interest in these problems. Call me again if there's anything else you want to know.

INTERVIEWER: Thanks. I certainly appreciate your help.

The interviewer in the case above may at first appear to have done very little, but closer scrutiny will show that by skillful questioning he led his subject to tell him just about what he wanted to know. He also listened carefully and gave encouragement at times. When the interview was over the employee was more sure of himself in his new orientation, which included study for self-improvement, and the interviewer had gathered quite a little information of importance in the formation of company policies.

The Transfer Interview

The technique for handling the transfer interview will vary according to who originates the interview. At times, employees will come in with a request for a transfer. In such a case, careful analysis should be made of the reason given since an entirely different reason may actually have motivated the request. Since, however, an employee may not be completely happy on the job because of certain conditions, a transfer to another department under a different head may make the difference between a good and a bad employee, or even between keeping a man or losing him outright. The reason is simply that each person will react differently to a given situation because, as an individual, he is different from all other people.

Sometimes a department head will make a request that a particular worker be transferred. Under these circumstances, a transfer should usually be given, but it should be pointed out indirectly to the man's new department head that the worker has certain good points which indicate that he will be a better employee in the new department. Finally, there are transfers for company reasons, to avoid layoffs, for instance, when work is reduced in one line and increased in another. In all cases, the interviewer will need to understand the company's purposes thoroughly and the employee as well as he can. The usual rule of examining the employee's personnel card before talking with him should be followed here. If possible, it is an advantage to talk with the man's supervisor before interviewing the man himself.

Employee-Requested Transfers.—An employee who asks for a transfer does so because of some dissatisfaction. The interviewer's main task will usually be to determine what the precise basis of this dissatisfaction is. In general, he will have two factors to contend with and two areas of investigation. The two factors with which he contends are the employee's understanding of his own dissatisfaction and his willingness or ability to explain it. The two aspects to investigate are,

first, a possible dissatisfaction of the employee with himself and, second, a possible dissatisfaction with the company.

People frequently are dissatisfied without knowing the reason why. This lack of knowledge not only does not lessen the uneasiness but usually tends to increase it. In consequence, the interviewer must often begin by helping the worker explore his own mind. Is it his home life that isn't pleasant? Does he lack funds or friends? Does he feel that he has talents and aptitudes that are not being developed and used? Or is it only the particular machine he operates, his neighboring employee, or the boss that "rubs him the wrong way?" In this exploration the interviewer must be keenly conscious of what the psychiatrist calls the manifest and latent content of the worker's mind. Are the (manifest) reasons given by the workman the true (latent) reasons, or are they rationalizations of his feelings? This is a situation where great insight into human nature is required for some people at times find themselves unable to face their problems directly and tell themselves the truth. It is often so much easier to make up a story that explains everything. A workman, for example, may want to get away from another workman whom he dislikes very much, but may be reluctant to admit that dislike because of the other man's popularity. Often these rationalizations are gone over so frequently in the mind of the rationalizer that they are finally believed. The interviewer, therefore, may have to become what can be termed a "friendly detective." He will not be interested in reproof but only in detecting the true reasons behind the request for a transfer.

When the interviewer has found the reason why the employee wants a transfer, his next task is to evaluate the reasons. If the employee believes he would progress faster in some other type of work, the interviewer should examine the question with him. Perhaps he will turn the individual over to the counseling interviewer at his point. In some companies, he may be able to arrange that the employee take some psychological tests and have his talents measured. There will be times when the employee is mistaken; when the desirability of the preferred work is only an illusion. It is the task of the

interviewer in the transfer interview to answer these questions:
Why does the employee want a transfer? Is the reason good?
Can anything better be done for him? Will he be equally
happy if something better is done for him?

Such an interview should not be carried on too directively.
It is the employee who must be satisfied, and it is more prob-
able that he will be if he reaches the conclusion by himself,
or at least co-operatively. Of course, he may be told directly
of opportunities of which he knew nothing.

In cases in which the employee is dissatisfied with the com-
pany, the interviewer must consider a number of factors.
Sometimes companies are opposed to granting transfers among
their employees, considering that such changes require new
adaptations, and new learning, and, at least temporarily, re-
duce efficiency. This view is often overemphasized. Transfers
also broaden the workers, ready them for promotions, and
make life more interesting for them and for these reasons,
some workers may push rather hard for a transfer. In such
cases the interviewer must act as an umpire. Whatever deci-
sion is reached, however, must be in line with sound public
relations. Even if they don't wish to, company executives
must sometimes allow transfers for the sake of morale. Some
management experts believe that this should be done more
frequently than it is.

In case the employee wants a transfer because of something
wrong with working conditions or supervision, it is the task
of the interviewer to find out exactly what is wrong. Is the
supervisor really at fault, or is it the employee himself who
is in the wrong? Should working conditions be changed, or
does the employee need more training or greater skill? All
facts learned regarding company morale, supervision, or work-
ing conditions should be reported to the proper authorities.
This should be done confidentially, of course, without involv-
ing a particular employee.

In conducting this type of transfer interview, then, the
main task is to search for the reasons why in such a friendly
way that employee loyalty is strengthened and reinforced
rather than weakened.

Company-Directed Transfers.—There are a variety of reasons why a company may wish to transfer certain employees; the primary task of the transfer interview, however, will nearly always be to reorient the worker in his new job and give him a feeling of security that he is apt to have lost by having been transferred. Since the transfer is company-directed, an added task of the interview is to get a reaction to the company policies directly responsible for the transfer. These interviews, like all others, have a final responsibility of furthering morale and company loyalty.

Among the reasons why company-directed transfers take place, we may note four: (1) to broaden the employee's experience and prepare him for promotion, (2) to readjust the company's labor force, (3) to prevent layoffs by using men temporarily in some substitute work, and (4) because of the foreman's request.

The first of these reasons is definitely complimentary, and the interviewer should have little difficulty in reassuring the worker, if the latter has any misgivings about the change. Sometimes a hesitant worker in such circumstances may be told that if he doesn't like the new work he can return to his old job; most transfers that are preparatory to promotion, however, will be welcomed.

When the company's labor force is being readjusted, the transferred employee may need much reorientation. He has probably done a good deal of thinking about his future in the old job. He may feel that the transfer indicates that he was not as good as the other fellows he worked with. He may feel that the transfer is the first step out. He may not understand the new opportunities in the new job. The alert interviewer, in a case of this kind, will point out to the man all the opportunities in the new location and develop a sense of security in his outlook.

When the man has been transferred to prevent laying him off, it is well to point out that it is company policy to continue a man on the pay roll if this is at all possible. If the man was transferred for lack of seniority, or for any specific lack of skill

that could be made up through training, it is well to tell him this.

When a man is being transferred at his foreman's request, it is again the interviewer's opportunity to point out to the man how he can improve. The interviewer will also emphasize that the company does not drop people from the pay roll easily, but keeps them on as long as this is a reasonable possibility. In these cases, the interviewer finds himself again in the position of an umpire. He must be honest and just; it is not wise to build up confidence in the employee at the expense of the truth. The interviewer, however, must also be friendly and objective. He can point out that the worker has new opportunities in his new position and that the personnel department is there to help him make good.

The Promotion Interview

Anyone would welcome the opportunity to bring an employee the news of his promotion. A promotion interview, however, has a good deal more to it than imparting the good news, and requires of the interviewer that he (1) congratulate and encourage the employee and tie in his advancement with an increased confidence in the company, (2) point out to the employee that his new promotion is not all "gravy" but will probably involve increased effort, more responsibility, and new adjustments, and (3) orient the worker in his new job.

Congratulations.—When the news of a promotion is communicated, the interviewer may be surprised to find that the recipient does not want it. Although this happens only in a minority of cases, it can prove a very real problem when it does occur. If the person selected for promotion was picked for specific reasons and it is desirable from the company standpoint that he take the new work, the interviewer may be confronted with a task of encouragement and persuasion. There are quite a number of reasons why promotions are not always welcomed. To begin with, every promotion is a change, and frequently employees are quite happy where they are. If the

workman has been unhappy in some previous job, he may hold on tightly to the present work which he likes. Then, again, he may have been asked to take the place of someone who has died, who has been sick a great deal, or who was very unpopular, and in the mind of the employee these extraneous factors may be associated with the new job. Even though the promotion is a step up a ladder that goes still further up, the employee may think the first step is too little and too late an advance in exchange for all he will lose in present friendships and familiar habits. A promotion to foreman status, moreover, usually requires that the individual drop out of his union. Many men feel that the protection of their union together with their regular wages as workers far outweighs the advantages of the status of foreman. Finally, there are some cases where the promotion is both desired and feared; where the individual would like to take the promotion but is afraid he cannot do the work. Nearly everyone has seen someone who had been promoted become ill on his new job, or fail and be returned to his old work, or worse still, leave the company because he could not be returned to his old work after his advancement. When the promoted man is uneasy or fears that something like this will happen to him, encouragement is required. The point must be made that the company is fair and will help the promoted employee in every way possible to make good in his new position.

The experienced interviewer does not, therefore, expect the promotion interview to be merely a congratulatory visit to a happy recipient of good news. He will be alert to a variety of problems that may be contained in the situation. In any case, the alert interviewer will never overlook the opportunity to build morale and increase the loyalty of the employees in the promotion interview. Nearly every employee feels a little gratitude toward his company when he is promoted. The interviewer will find a double theme he can play upon here. One point he can stress is that the employee is a good workman and has won the advancement on his own merits, that he is one of the elite. Here is a theme and an opportunity for the interviewer to give the employee a hearty congratulation.

Such praise, so far as it has any truth in it, strengthens a man's morale and makes him determined to do even better in the future. And this, of course, is all to the advantage of the company. The interviewer must think himself thoroughly into these situations and be sincere in his statements. Flattery and insincerity do much more harm than good.

The second theme at the disposal of the interviewer is that the company is always fair and eager to promote employees as fast as circumstances permit. Such an employee, in such a company, is on his way up and it is a happy thing to be able to bid him good speed. (All these statements must have some basis in truth, of course, or they will boomerang.) It may be observed here that promotional announcements can be made in public, in contrast to criticism, which should always be made in private. By making a promotion announcement public, the interviewer accomplishes two things; he increases the congratulations by bringing the man's friends in on it, and he points out to all that the company is pleased when a man can be promoted.

The Responsibilities.—The next task of the interviewer is to point out that the promotion will probably bring heavier responsibilities. Some people believe that the more promotions, the less the work, and that if a person can just get up a little way in a business organization, he won't have to do much more than tell other people what to do and attend conferences. With real advancement according to this line of thought, he will be able to assign someone else to attend the conferences.

The interviewer bringing news of promotions must often disabuse his interviewee at once of false ideas of the ease of the higher job. He must point out that more skill will be required in the new job and that the difficulties will be greater. His new work, for example, may require the employee to get along with someone who is known to be a little too acid in his speech, or one who holds on tightly to authority while shifting responsibility, or who knows the work so thoroughly that he forgets to give the little bits of information that would help

a new man to adjust, and so on. A good deal of diplomacy is
needed by the interviewer in such cases. He must be careful
not to say anything actually derogatory of anyone but still,
give the promoted employee a hint of some of the difficulties
he will meet. A good way to do this is often by pointing out
weaknesses and strengths in the promoted employee. "You
were picked out because you are particularly skillful in getting
along with people. You will find a few situations in your new
job where this skill is called for." Or: "In your new job you
will have to take more responsibility for materials than you
have had before." Or: "You are beginning to break into man-
agement a little bit, and you will have to learn some things
that never bothered you before."

Orientation.—All the interview elements we have discussed,
with respect to both encouragement and warning, are related
to some extent to orientation. They all are related to directing
the mind of the employee ahead to his work, with the aim
of helping him make a success. But when the interviewer con-
cerns himself specifically with orientation, he must know
rather thoroughly the job description of the new job and its
place in the total scheme of production.

Orientation, as we have noted repeatedly, requires infor-
mation. So the interviewer in contrasting the job descriptions
of the job the man is leaving and the one he is going to will
point out new skills that are required, knowledge requirements
that are different, responsibilities that are new. The workman
will probably catch on most rapidly if the new and old jobs
are compared and contrasted. Similarities will make him feel
prepared for the new work. Differences will prepare him for
the need of new learning and new adjustments.

The promotion interview is a good place for the interviewer
to point out the training possibilities available within the
company or the community, or even some that must be ob-
tained by correspondence. At time of promotion, the em-
ployee is apt to be in a mood to look ahead, and reorganize
his life program. It may be important to the company that
the man do this. By staying long in one place people some-

times forget they can move. When they discover, in a promotion, that change and development are possible, the idea should be thoroughly examined. It does not pay, of course, to stimulate employees to hope for more than their abilities warrant, but forward-looking, ambitious employees are always more productive than frustrated people who have accepted things as they came.

It is now apparent that the promotion interview, which may look very simple and pleasant at first, is one that emphasizes some of the difficulties of the interviewer's job. The interviewer should know all about the company, its personnel policies, the lines of promotion, its jobs, and the people who fill them. When the interviewer is to meet with a particular employee, he will want to know all about the man that time and opportunity will allow him to learn both from the man's personnel record and, if possible, from a talk with the man's foreman. He will then need skill in interviewing and a sound knowledge of human nature. With this equipment he can provide a considerable service for the company by maintaining morale, keeping open the lines of communication, increasing the efficiency of individual workmen, and gathering useful information for management as to what is going on "in the ranks."

The Merit-Rating Interview

The merit-rating interview is primarily an orienting interview, as we have previously noticed. Its purpose is to help the employee "find himself" and his most available path of advancement within the company, and also to see the hindrances within himself that are holding him back. It cannot be a completely nondirective interview because the employee must be told what his supervisors think of him, and some of those thoughts, at least, will be unpleasant and hard to accept. Neither can it be a completely directive interview since a mind cannot be oriented from outside. So the merit-rating interview is usually a cooperative interview. Some of the data are presented by the interviewer (see Fig. 18), and the understanding and reorientation is accomplished by the interviewee. Both

interviewer and interviewee, then, will work together on examining the significance of the employee's ratings.

The merit-rating interview is a comparatively important interview and should be arranged and prepared in advance. The interviewer should have reviewed all available information known about the worker before the interview begins (see Fig. 18). Since the employee himself is the main subject of the interview, he will be vitally interested in it; remarks made to him may be remembered for years. If this interview is carried out well, it can have a marked influence on the development of the person involved and lead to improved company morale.

There are a number of factors in the merit-rating interview which we will consider under the following heads: (1) the interests of the company, (2) the interests of the interviewee, (3) the interests of the interviewer, and (4) the technique of the interview.

The Interests of the Company.—The company has various interests in the merit ratings and in the interview. It is obviously to the interest of the company to know the kind of people that it has on the pay roll. So far as rating scales indicate reliably what the workman is like, they render a service to the company itself. Transfers, promotions, and work assignments can all be made more effective by a better understanding of the employees.

Some companies, however, have stopped with the statement that this information is their business, and have refused to hand it on to the people who were rated. This policy is weak in that it does not make full use of information obtained. The data on employee abilities, when skillfully explained to the men involved, can increase the efficiency of the workers and improve their morale.

The company's interest in the interview will be to learn still more about the employee, and his working conditions, than is told in his ratings, and to stimulate the employee and win more of his loyalty. If the employee is invited, as he should be, to examine the evaluation made of him and to comment on it, a large amount of information may be brought

EMPLOYEE RATING

Name..............................

Job Title..............................

Department..............................

Division..............................

JOB FACTORS	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11
Performance on Job Consider volume of acceptable work produced which can reasonably be expected in this job over rating period											
Cooperation How effectively does he get along with his subordinates, equals, and superiors by use of tact, fairness, teamwork and attitude toward company policies?					Normal		Expectancy				
Initiative Consider results obtained through resourcefulness and general application of mental and physical effort.											
Dependability Can he be counted on, thoroughness, accuracy, and ability to do a job without close watch.											
Analytical Ability Consider his ability to grasp essentials of job, understand new ideas, work around complexities and plan action.											
Work Methods Is he cost conscious, orderly in arrangement of work, method and supplies? Does he make good use of them?											

Weight Factors Req'd by Job → Job → Here
0—No Importance to Job
1—Minor Importance
2—Secondary Importance
3—Primary Importance

Against What Standard Is Employee Being Rated?
____ 100% perfection
____ Best worker in Dep't.
____ Your evaluation of what job requires

Capacity for Growth (Check one)
____ Future Growth Doubtful
____ Short Fuse Promote
____ Recommended for Promotion
____ Great Future Growth Possible

Rating Discussed with
Employee
____ Accepted
____ Appealed

Date..............................

Supervisor..............................

FIG. 18.—Front Page of an Employee Rating Form.

out in regard to employee morale in general, and specific working conditions in particular. Sometimes the workman will admit his weaknesses and accept the criticisms made of him; more often, perhaps, he will try to explain, and perhaps justify himself. Although a good many of his statements may be rationalizations, there may be much that is true. If the company obtains all such valid information from these interviews and corrects conditions that call for change, it will win considerable employee loyalty by doing so.

The company also learns a good deal more about each individual workman by use of the merit-rating interview. When a man is praised and reproved, he is stimulated in various ways to display himself. The praise may lead him to tell "how he did it," and involve all sorts of responses—his pride in his "influential friends," his belief in luck, and egotistical vanity over some trivial accomplishment, or evidence of true modesty. When critical ratings are presented, we find that some people cannot accept any criticism without an excuse. Some are disheartened by the slightest unfavorable comment, and some hardly seem to be impressed with very sharp criticism. If the merit-rating interview is recorded and such observations added to the employees rating, company evaluation of its employees can be improved considerably.

Having made the observations and reported them, the company is under some obligation to use them. Employees who have been highly approved should be able to collect pay increases or promotions before too long. The company should also take some responsibility for suggesting means of improvement for those who have low ratings. If there is company training available, the way to obtain it should be made clear. If community training of some kind is to be recommended, such suggestions are always better if they are specific.

The company will not get full value from giving the merit-rating interview unless it is used, at least partly, to build morale. The employee should be informed that every company does not go to so much trouble for its employees. He should be led to see that he is being studied carefully for his own good, as well as the company's. Not everybody can have

his abilities carefully rated, just as not everyone has the opportunity to take a series of psychological tests. The ratings can be both of great personal value to the employee, and a considerable help to him in his career. A little selling of this kind is entirely legitimate since the statements are true, and they help in building employee loyalty.

The Interests of the Interviewee.—The interviewee is interested in finding out all about himself from the company point of view. He will want to know if he is reasonably secure in his job; whether the ratings merely point out what he must do to advance or whether he had better think of finding another job. If the ratings suggest another job, should he look for that job outside the company or by a transfer within it? The interviewer can help here by being perfectly honest—with tact! If the company is interested in keeping the man, he should be informed that he is perfectly secure and that the ratings point out requirements for advancement, or pay increases. If the man is not considered a valuable employee, he may be led to resign, to obtain more training, or to find work more suited to his aptitudes. In such cases, the merit-rating interview may take some of the form of vocational guidance. If the employee is guided in his career, his good will will be retained at the same time that his place is vacated for a more efficient employee.

There will not be many cases where the employee will be led to look for another job on account of his ratings. More often, the employee's question will be: "How can I improve?" Considerable service will be rendered the man if the interviewer can answer this question. It is usually easy to tell a man how to improve if all he lacks is some skill. But it is often much harder if he appears to lack some personality requirement. If the ratings indicate that the man lacks initiative, is not considered co-operative, or is not very industrious, the interviewer will need to analyze the situation with him. Considerable skill is required for work of this kind.

Sometimes the employee will not agree with the ratings at all, will not consider them just, and will insist that they be

changed. In such cases, the employee should be able to present his case as a grievance. Some companies have a committee especially for such instances to hear the cases of employees who believe they have been misjudged.

In any event the employee should be assured that he can change his ratings by improvement and told that he will be rated again at the next regular period, probably within six months. Some companies inform men directly when they have removed poor ratings from their record.

Everyone is glad to hear good things about himself, so the employee will be encouraged and gratified in hearing of his good ratings. If he is interviewed well, the good judgments will, in a great many cases, more than offset the bad ones in the employee's mind, and he will be sent back to his job with a favorable attitude toward the company.

The interviewer must always remember that the employee is not just being told a few good and bad points about himself; he is being reoriented. This means that the significance of the ratings in regard to the employee's aptitudes and plans, his experience and training, should all be considered. When the merit-rating interview is over, the employee should know a lot more about himself than he did before, not only as related to his present job but to the company as a whole. He should understand himself better as a personality. If this goal is reached, the company will earn a very satisfactory return on having provided the interview.

The Interests of the Interviewer.—The interests of the interviewer will differ depending upon whether he is the supervisor who made the ratings or whether he is from the personnel department. If the supervisor who made the ratings is interviewing his own man, he will be interested in using the interview to develop a better understanding of the man and a more cordial relationship with him. In many cases the supervisor is asked to interview those he has rated in order to make him cautious in his ratings. At any rate he should not so much "tell the man" as make the interview a co-operative endeavor in finding out how the employee can be successful.

He can do this by taking the initiative in asking the "whys and wherefores" and by showing himself willing to change a rating if discussion with the worker seems to indicate that it should be done. A rule is sometimes given that every criticism should be stated as a question. "Did you expect to be rated a little low on initiative, John?" And, "Do you know why that seems to be one of your characteristics?" The question approach saves the interviewer from making dogmatic statements which the employee may not accept or which, in crude form, may hurt him more than is necessary.

When the supervisor explains his own ratings, he should be particularly careful not to take the "good-bad" point of view. The interview is not primarily directed to praise or reproof, but to explanation and further examination. Particularly when talking of his own ratings, the supervisor should never lose his temper or argue. A supervisor who can be objective and searching, and helpful to the employee in planning for improvement has done a good deal to bind his men to him.

Finally, of course, the supervisor must never build up his own ego in the interview, nor put the employee in a situation where it is difficult for him to maintain his self-respect.

When the merit-rating interviewer is from the personnel department, his interests will be somewhat different. He will want to know how the man lines up with the previous judgments of him and whether any indications are present that would improve employment judgment. Particularly when the employment interviewer, himself, conducts the merit-rating interview, will he want to check the ratings against the employment estimate. It is by continually checking his judgment against the judgment of others that the employment interviewer improves himself. Merit-rating interviews, when he is allowed to conduct them, are a great opportunity of the interviewer for self-improvement.

It must be remembered, however, that the merit-rating interview is not held for the benefit of the interviewer, but for the employee. The personnel interviewer must help the interviewee see what is happening to him in his job. He must show him how he has improved and advanced since coming to

work, and in what ways he needs further improvement for still more advancement. It is easy for the personnel man to be more impersonal and objective than the supervisor. He did not make the ratings (and, not having made them himself, he usually does not tell who did), so the whole air of the interview is apt to be a little more relaxed.

The Techniques of the Merit-Rating Interview.—There are several special techniques that should be used in the merit-rating interview. To begin with, the employee should be oriented in the whole merit-rating system as used by the company before his own case is discussed. He should know that this is an interview that is accorded to everyone of his grade and that it has nothing to do with discipline—that he is not being "called in on the carpet." The company has not picked him out from the other employees for criticism, and he is just as secure in his job, in fact more secure, than he was before the interview. At this point, some morale building can be done by pointing out that, for the most part, only very advanced companies give merit-rating interviews, and that the employee is being given an opportunity to learn how to make himself more secure—and more valuable—in the company.

The second step is to point out to the interviewee that his ratings are absolutely confidential and that no one knows anything about them except those who made them, the personnel authorities, and himself.

The third step requires that the interviewer summarize or condense the ratings and present them without all the technicalities of the rating blanks themselves. There is some difference in practice here, but there is no reason to disturb the employee by trying to explain complicated rating scales. If the man is shown the actual rating blank he is likely to become confused or skeptical. After all, his main interest is in the judgments made of him and not in whether the rating scale includes a check list or consists of scales of three or five units. He merely wants to know in what ways he has been judged superior and in what ways it would appear that he needs development or training. As a general rule, the infor-

mation should be given to the employee in as simple a manner as possible.

Finally, when the beginning of the interview has been carried through and friendly relations well established, the interviewer will want to follow a little formula in telling the actual ratings. This formula is as follows:

Examine the good ratings.
Examine the bad ratings.
Examine the good ratings again.

Informing an individual of his low ratings so that he will consider them objectively and see what he can do about improving them is always difficult and requires skill. Experience indicates that the best way to do this is to wrap up the low ratings in the high ones. To congratulate a man on what he has done well helps to get the interview going and gives the man's self-respect a boost that makes him able to take a few criticisms in his stride. When these criticisms have been considered, it helps to review again his strong points and his high ratings in order to send the man away in a good frame of mind.

A skillfully handled merit-rating interview informs the employee and gathers information for the company. These ends cannot be accomplished without concomitantly strengthening employee loyalty and increasing efficiency.

Chapter 19

COMPLAINT, DISCIPLINARY, AND EXIT
INTERVIEWS

The group of interviews we shall consider in this chapter—
the complaint, disciplinary, exit and post-exit interviews—are
all primarily directed at the gathering of information. Some-
thing has gone wrong in each case, and must be corrected. It
may be, of course, that the main trouble is with the employee
involved and that the company's only mistake was in hiring
him. In that case if the company helps the individual on to
some other job more in keeping with his abilities, it will profit
by the fact that the workman will still remain a friendly neigh-
bor or customer. If the cause of the trouble is within the
company, the situation is much more serious. In that case,
letting the employee go will not correct the trouble. The
interviewer, therefore, must dig in and find where the critical
trouble is; until the cause of the trouble is isolated, there can
be no end to the difficulties.

The Complaint Interview

The first problem here is that of recognizing when one is
faced with an actual complaint. Nearly everyone does a certain
amount of grouching and complaining that might be con-
sidered a healthy by-product of effort. Most people work for
wages, or for particular ends, rather than for the pure love of
working. And just as an engine isn't completely efficient and
allows some steam to escape, so the average person grumbles
and rumbles a little as he plods through the chores of the
day. "I should have been born rich instead of good looking,
and then I wouldn't have to do this never-ending labor." Such

a statement, for example isn't a complaint but a more or less healthy grumble at the effort that comes before the reward.

Complaints must be quickly recognized and separated from the usual daily complaining. An illustration can be found in any company cafeteria. There probably never was a restaurant or an eating place where the customers did not complain about the food, the prices, the after-effects, or the monotony of the service. It is almost standard practice to criticize any public lunchroom in which one has eaten three times or more. A good deal of this complaining can be put down immediately as grouching and written off as not worthy of much attention. That does not indicate, however, that many public restaurants, perhaps even most public restaurants, do not have some defect in their food, or service, or surroundings that is worthy of a true complaint. Real complaints should be listened to and corrected or the people involved will be dissatisfied and withhold the loyalty and honest work that makes a business prosper.

Grouches That Are Not Complaints.—In attempting to find some signs of true complaints, it is possible to write off immediately those things objected to which the complainant can recognize as inevitable or unchangeable. When some one complains that it is the month of December with three cold winter months ahead, that is not a complaint; it is just a little grouching at the inevitable. When a person complains that life is all work and that he was born with a pick in his hands and will die holding a shovel, that isn't a complaint. He thinks of it, usually, as inevitable, and just likes to hear himself talk about it. In England during the war, when a bomb destroyed transportation, men went to business on foot even though, in some cases, they had to walk half a day, and never considered turning in a complaint. They recognized that there was nothing that could be done about it.

A complaint is something out of the run of accepted things that isn't right and that the complainant believes can be corrected. We find a good illustration in medical practice. When a patient goes to his doctor, the doctor asks him,

"What is your complaint?" This, of course, means to the
patient: "What is wrong with me that the doctor can fix?"
If the doctor wishes to tell the man that he has no com-
plaint, he merely says to him, "There's nothing wrong with
you Joe. You're just getting older, that's all."

Kinds of Complaints.—An almost endless number of things
might be objected to by a workman, and be corrected. It
might appear useless to attempt to classify them, but a simple
classification, even though it does not include all the possible
complaints, may help to clarify the discussion that follows.
Such a classification follows.

1. Complaints tend frequently to involve situations that
are not easily talked about. Had they been easy to discuss they
would have been corrected at the beginning and never grown
to the status of complaints. Having to work near some one
who suffers from considerable body odor is an example. Such
a condition is apt to be suffered in silence for quite a time
because of the difficulty of saying anything about it. Any type
of objectional fellow-worker will produce a similar situation.
It does not seem to be quite right to many men to complain
about one's companions, so the worker may bear quite a good
deal of inconvenience of one kind or another before he is dis-
turbed enough to report the trouble. Or again, a workman
may feel that his foreman has been dishonest with him, or has
not dealt with him justly. Here he hesitates to speak for two
reasons. He may be afraid of being considered just another
man who can't take instructions and wants to do everything
his own way. Then, too, a little fear of the foreman's ill will
may creep into the situation; it is not always a healthy thing
to complain of one's boss. When a workman begins com-
plaining about something that is hard to talk about, it is
seldom casual grouching and deserves careful attention.

2. Situations in which competitive motivation runs high
often may cause complaints. A window between two work-
men is an example. One workman may want the window
open because he feels a great need for fresh air. The other
may want the window closed because he suffers from colds.

In some cases in which a machine or an expensive tool is used only part of the time and must be shared by several workers, trouble will arise. Frequently, one person will not ready the needed machine for the next person's use, or will leave the needed tool in his own area when he is through with it. Such items may be insignificant in themselves, but if competitive motivation between the men is involved with them, they may cause a good deal of trouble.

3 Situations of considerable importance to a particular workman, but apparently of little significance to any one else, are a fruitful source of complaints. Such instances are found when a workman can't figure out his pay and, since no one is vitally interested in his pay check but himself, feels that he may be doing more than he is paid for, or when a workman is frequently ordered to do work without any reasons being given and doesn't know why he is doing certain things. Frequent changes in work, particularly when a man is told to leave things unfinished, congested work space, lack of arrangements to care for children while their mothers work—all are of considerable importance to the person involved but without enough general importance to insure their correction. Such individual matters are frequently cause of complaints.

4. Where some injustice has been done, there is almost certain to be a complaint. A foreman who has a favorite can cause a good deal of unrest in a department. Decisions which were unfair because of any number of reasons can similarly arouse objections and lead directly to the voicing of complaints.

5. Finally, complaints are often caused by unrecognized difficulties within the person who made the complaint. Maladjusted people are nearly always discontented people, and by their uneasiness, or lack of composure, often arouse unfriendly responses in their neighbors. The maladjusted person, as a result, frequently has a good deal to complain about and wonders why. In trying to explain his discomforts, the maladjusted person often projects them onto the environment, and assigns the causes to some exterior agency. For instance, he

may believe he is taken advantage of because he is younger than the other workmen, or because he is older, or better educated, or lacking education, or for almost any other reason. The characteristic of the maladjusted person is that all his complaints turn out to be symptoms rather than causes of his discomfort; correcting one complaint does not do very much for him for he will soon discover some new source of grievance.

When a company has a counseling program, the maladjusted person should be directed to the counseling interviewer. Here the cause of his trouble will be searched for where it actually exists—inside himself. In many cases, the trouble will be corrected and the individual helped to become a useful, successful workman.

Levels of Examination.—Having observed the general kinds of problems that make complaints, it is now desirable to turn our attention to analysing the complaint itself. The complaint situation can be investigated from the following aspects: (1) the materials and situations involved, (2) the people, (3) the unique characteristics of the particular complaint, and, finally, (4) the purposes and intentions involved.

Complaints sometimes occur over the opening or shutting of windows or doors, the scattering of dirt on the floor, the use of tools. The simplest solution, in many cases, may be providing a new tool or an extra wastebasket, or making a fixed rule in regard to the opening or closing of the window. Tools and materials are easier to push about and arrange than people. So, for quick solution to the complaint, it is best to see if it can be done in some simple way by dealing with materials or supplies.

If the complaint cannot be settled on the basis of materials, the second focal point to examine is the people. Is the complainant one of the maladjusted people previously described, or is his complaint against such a person? If maladjustment is involved, the counseling interviewer is called for. Is the person making the complaint mistaken, or is some other person greedy, jealous, prejudiced, or interfering in some way

with the work? Perhaps the complaint can be solved on the person-to-person level.

If the complaint is still not solved, it will be well to classify and define it. Classification such as "jealousy between two workmen" frequently helps the interviewer to find some precedent for handling it. Definition adds the feature of determining exactly how this jealousy situation is unique and different from all other jealousy situations. If the characteristics of the situation can be found which make it different from other similar situations, there is a chance that its cure will be found among them.

In case the complaint is still unsolved at this stage, it is probably time to describe it as a grievance and send it through the grievance procedure for arbitration. In case there is no grievance procedure, the interviewer's next best technique is to make a temporary arrangement that will stop the irritation for a short time, perhaps a week, and then, after getting a new perspective by the passage of time, try again to work out a permanent solution.

Procedures of the Complaint Interview.—Generally, this type of interview cannot be prepared for in advance since it usually begins with an employee appearing unexpectedly at the door, ready to "blow his top," if a man, or on the verge of tears, if a woman. The best preparation is an extra box of cleaning tissues in the drawer, a jug of water on the desk, and an extra package of cigarettes at hand.

The first step is to calm the individual. One may say, "I'll be with you in a minute. You won't mind if I make this telephone call first?" The interruption will give the person time to get himself together and enable him to give his story later with less emotional disturbance. Another technique is to keep a comfortable chair on the other side of the room and ask the individual to assist in bringing it closer to the desk. This, too, helps to work off some of the excess emotional energy.

If the interviewee is quite ready to talk, there is no good reason to delay. The second step in the interview, therefore,

is to ask the person to tell what's on his mind and keep him talking without interruption till he has relieved his tension and can relax a bit. It should not do any harm if the workman says some harsh things in this period. They should not be recorded, although of course the interviewer is paying close attention to everything that is being said for its factual content.

The interviewer's attitude is that of objective listening. Sometimes he will put a question to keep the person talking and to get all the angles of the story. It is sometimes well, too, to ask the complainant what he would have done if he had been in the supervisor's place. Often such a question reveals why the individual feels that he has been done an injustice. As the interview goes on, the interviewer may have to help the interviewee tell what is on his mind. This is particularly true in cases where the worker may be criticized by other people for the complaint he is making. It will not be easy for the workman to say that his foreman is dishonest or that he suspects another person or persons of sabotaging some of the work he produced. But a complaint that is not made cannot very well be answered. In consequence, the interviewer will at times have to press and urge a little bit in his effort to get the whole story.

As the story comes out, the interviewer must continually ask himself whether each item is a symptom or cause. The individual may be complaining that he is not being treated fairly in work assignments, that he is repeatedly given the more unpleasant tasks. Careful questioning may bring out that the foreman distributes the work assignments the first thing in the morning, and the employee has a habit of being just a little bit late. The foreman gives the best assignments to those on time. The cause, in this case, seems to be the habit of tardiness on the part of the complainant rather than any unjust partiality on the part of the foreman.

It is often said that in examining these situations the interviewer must never argue. Perhaps a more positive way of saying this is that the interviewer should continue to question in a friendly and objective manner until he can state the

complaint in a way that satisfies both himself and the complainant. A complaint that is clearly stated can be thoroughly examined. Frequently, the interviewer will work toward the final statements by some preliminary ones that the interviewee can correct. "Is it correct to say that this machine which is used by both you men is equally necessary to both?" "Is it correct to say that Joe never oils the machine, nor cleans it; that he leaves it adjusted for his own job?" By asking questions in this way and having them corrected, the interviewer can work towards a statement of the complaint that is acceptable. When the complaint is clearly and adequately stated, the next step is to determine whether it can be corrected or not.

In case the individual has complained about something that cannot be changed—the seniority rights in selecting vacation periods, for instance, which he does not like but which have become settled company policy—it usually helps to explain the policy and the reasons for adopting it. All that the interviewer can do in such cases is to point out that everyone works under some difficulties which, though unpleasant, cannot be helped. He can tell the interviewee that he did right to come in and talk it over, and to do so with any other problem. He may have better luck next time. Incidentally, all complaints that run up against the stone wall of company policy should be carefully recorded with a view to possible change of the policy later on.

When the individual has complained of something that can be corrected, it is usually wise to see to the correction immediately, or with as little delay as possible. When corrections can be made, then, the interview should end on that note. The employee has brought to the attention of the company something that was wrong and needed correction. He should be thanked for doing so. He should be told that the company is always eager to correct injustices and that he has helped to keep the business running smoothly.

Throughout the complaint interview the interviewer must never forget that he has been gathering information for the company as well as solving an individual problem. Opera-

tions must run smoothly for a business to be successful. Complaints are an indication that something is wrong somewhere. It is the interviewer's business to make the immediate adjustment to the irritation, if that is possible, but also to inform management of what has been learned regarding employee morale, working conditions, methods and procedures. The machine runs most smoothly that is kept continually in adjustment.

The Disciplinary Interview

In the complaint interview, which we have just discussed, something has gone wrong that disturbs the employee to the extent that he initiates an interview. In disciplinary interviews, however, something has gone wrong that disturbs the company, so that it brings about the interview. Discipline implies, too, that the cause for the discipline lies within the employee. Violating company rules, appearing on the job intoxicated, violating fire regulations, fighting, or any one of quite a number of irregularities can be the cause for discipline.

Since discipline is company-initiated, the interviewer will almost always be able to schedule this interview and prepare for it. Such preparation, of course, involves gathering all the facts that can be obtained from sources other than the person involved. The interviewer should examine the man's entire company record. He should talk to the man's supervisor and to any other person who may have first-hand information about what has taken place.

When he has informed himself as well as he possibly can, the interviewer's next step is to schedule the interview as soon as possible. There are at least two reasons why discipline should be meted out quickly. One of these is to prevent a repetition of the behavior that is the cause for the discipline, and the other is the psychological reason that delayed punishment does not become very closely connected with the crime. When discipline can be administered almost as quickly as the behavior occurs, it often does not have to be very severe to accomplish its purpose.

Another factor of considerable importance is that the disciplining interviewer take full responsibility for any decision he reaches. It takes all the edge out of discipline to have some one say: "If I were in charge around here I wouldn't do this. I have to punish you to hold my own job, so let's make it sound like something in public, anyway." All good discipline is administered carefully, objectively, with the implication that the employee has brought the punishment on himself, but that with good behavior he can win praises in the future.

As a pre-interview factor the interviewer should be very careful that he is not projecting his own troubles. We have noticed that the cause for complaints is sometimes within the person who makes them, and is just projected to the outside. The same can be true with discipline. The foreman or executive may have difficulties within himself that he has not been able to quiet. In response to such discomfort he begins to look here and there for reasons why things do not run well. With such a fault-finding attitude, it is not very hard for him to find other people who are not careful in their responsibilities, or who appear not to be carrying their full share of the work load, or who are guilty of some other failure. In such cases, the greater the maladjustment of the disciplinarian, the more certain he is apt to feel that some one else needs discipline. The interviewer must be sure that he is not responding to something which is inside of himself and which should be his own problem. Particularly as the interview progresses must he retain his objective and calm temper. Excitement and anger on the part of the interviewer are a good sign that he has gotten his own internal motivation mixed up in some way with the disciplinary procedure.

Finally, the disciplinary interviewer should remember that his main task is one of gathering information. Why did the man break the rules? Are the rules bad? Should there be an exception? Was there some contributory difficulty, such as in the case of the watchman who slept on duty because some one at home was sick and he was overloaded with work. Even in the case of drunkenness there may be a contributory reason which can sometimes be corrected; a man who drinks to excess, for

example, because he is badly in debt and does not know how to arrange his finances. The interviewer is not there simply to lay on the whip, but to find out why the whip is necessary and if any preventative measures can be taken. If such information is recorded and studied, it is possible also that it may affect company policies. It would certainly be expected that if much discipline is called for, bad management must be partly to blame. Consequently, to minimize the need for discipline and to maintain employee morale at a high level, all cases of required discipline should be examined carefully to make sure there are no elements in them that indicate general unrest or dissatisfaction among the employees.

Procedures of the Disciplinary Interview.—The first step of the disciplinary interview is usually to open with some favorable report to the interviewee. There is something pleasant that can be said to almost any workman. He is never tardy, the other employees like him, he is skillful, he is quiet, he is cheerful, he works hard, he has a nice family, he has made an enviable record as a fisherman or a golf player. Nobody likes to take his medicine without a bit of sugar, so this usual courtesy should be accorded to those who are to be disciplined. To mention favorable items, too, will help get the interviewee talking which he must do if there is to be any interview at all. If the intention is to "tell the man off," this can be done just as well in writing; a method which will also provide a record useful in case the man needs to be disciplined a second time for the same offense. For those who believe the effect of the discipline is spoiled by a too-friendly beginning, the subject-matter here can be a neutral matter like the weather, implying neither praise nor blame.

The interviewer will want to make sure that he has arranged for privacy. Nobody should be able to sit at the next desk or near-by and listen in. Any rebuke that becomes a matter of gossip and "goes the rounds" becomes very much more severe in the process. It is likely to be twisted out of all resemblance to its original form and become persecution rather than justice.

With privacy assured and the interview started pleasantly, the interviewer is ready to bring up any item of misconduct. It is often recommended that the matter be introduced in the form of a question rather than as a direct rebuke. This interquestioning form has several advantages. It keeps the interviewer from making a mistake and charging the man with something that did not take place, and so unnecessarily creating ill will. It also operates to keep the interviewee talking and divulging more information. People are apt to "shut up like a clam" to a direct charge of guilt, and perhaps not even defend themselves when they are innocent if their feelings are badly hurt. It is better to question, "John, is it true that you were smoking down in the supply room yesterday?" than to say, "John I called you in here to penalize you for smoking down in the supply room yesterday."

The interviewer should be sure to listen carefully, not only because he may be mistaken, but also because he will want to get all the facts and all the reasons why. As the interviewee goes under stress with the presentation of the charges against him, the interviewer will want to note especially his emotional reactions. Sometimes when a person's face remains impassive, the twisting of his fingers or movements of his body or feet may show the strain he feels. The interviewer must not conclude that an emotional reaction is necessarily a sign of guilt. Some honest people are much more emotionally disturbed over being charged with a crime than some guilty people are when accused of a crime they actually did commit. Emotion does suggest that the interviewer should proceed cautiously and watchfully. Since people frequently give themselves away completely when under emotional strain, the interviewer must be constantly alert.

As the interview proceeds it should be clear that it is the action and not the person that is being examined. The employee should always be allowed to maintain his self-respect; the interviewer should never allow himself to fall into an accusatory attitude. Few people are aware of all the forces that go into determining their actions. We all respond to all kinds of "subconscious" influences that make us do things

without knowing fully why. The interviewer should attempt to enlist the help of the employee in finding out why the action was done. The search for causes, moreover, should not be satisfied too easily. The interviewer must continually question whether the reason given is a cause or just a symptom. The individual, for instance, neglected some of his duties because he was "tired." But what caused his fatigue? The discipline, of course, should be more closely related to education than to punishment whenever possible.

In the disciplinary interview, the interviewer must not forget that he is the jury as well as the judge, and must suspend judgment until all the evidence is in. This is very difficult to do since it is not sufficient that the interviewer merely withhold a statement of his decision, which he has already reached. This decision is very apt to show in his manner which can be as forbidding as anything he says. If this happens, the interviewer fails in his main purpose, that is, to get all the information the employee is able to give him. He needs a truly judicious nature and the ability to withhold any decision within himself until all the evidence has been gathered. When all the data have been assembled, it must be weighed carefully. The interviewer should separate facts from opinion, direct observation from circumstantial evidence, and, in many cases, make allowances for memory errors. But after careful consideration he should be ready to make a decision that he, personally, can take the responsibility for.

When the decision is reached, some appropriate action should be taken. The appropriateness of the action has several aspects. It should be objectively presented and should fit the misbehavior. It should be given with authority and without anger or excitement; no spite should be allowed to enter. And under no circumstances should the interviewer allow any implication that the person receiving the discipline is an unworthy or scurrilous person. Finally, when discipline has been administered, the interviewer should arrange some kind of follow-up to make sure the discipline was effective. The interviewer should be particularly alert, in the follow-up, for any new facts that may have been overlooked. It is one of the

intricacies of emotional conduct that just after being released from stress, people are apt to give expression to previously inhibited factors. Even after the interview is over, therefore, the interviewer should be alert to catch any further item of information that might help to explain the case.

The Exit Interview

There are various reasons for separations, some pleasant and some unpleasant. Consequently, the interview will vary. The first underlying principle in all cases, however, is that all information related to the incident should be obtained and recorded for future use. Exit information is basic to an analysis of the causes of labor turnover; it permits checking of morale, working conditions, and company policies and explains the reactions of certain kinds of employees to certain kinds of jobs.[1] Secondly, the individual must be retained if he is a good worker and if his wish to leave is due to a misunderstanding, and finally, the good will of the employee toward the company should be maintained.

Exit interviews are day-to-day occurrences and bring in current information as contrasted to attitude surveys which are made only occasionally. Moreover, the employee who is leaving has few inhibitions about talking and may say many things that would never be expressed on any other occasion. According to a paraphrase by Dr. Charles Drake:[2] "If you want to hear something to please you, ask a friend; if you want the truth, ask a discharged employee." Sometimes a discharged employee is surly. In these cases probing for information and challenging questions are in order. For example, "weren't you big enough for the job?" It is necessary to get the information, but it is equally necessary to maintain good will, so the interview must always end in a friendly way. When the information indicates that the employee is leav-

[1] Policyholders Service Bureau, The Exit Interview (New York: Metropolitan Life Insurance Co., 1947).
[2] Charles A. Drake, "The Exit Interview as a Tool of Management," Personnel, XVIII, No. 6, (1942), 346 50.

ing because of a quarrel, because of some failure to adapt himself to the group, or because of a misunderstanding with the foreman, it is often possible to solve the problem and retain the employee. A transfer to some other department may accomplish the objective.

If the employee has resigned for another position, the interviewer can learn through skilful questioning just why the man feels that there is better opportunity with the other company. It is amazing how often the interviewer can learn of legitimate employee grievances from the last words of a departing worker.

If the employee's services are being terminated by the company, it is up to the interviewer to convince him that it is with regret that the action is being taken. If possible, the interviewer should at this time suggest other sources of employment. Sometimes a vocational guidance service can be rendered by helping the person apply his talents to better advantage elsewhere. If this can be accomplished, the incident will end happily.

The Kind of Information to Gather.—Roughly speaking, the exit interviewer will try to get information that will check, first of all, employment and placement practices. One form used for recording valuable exit information is reproduced in Fig. 19. This may be done by asking the employee if he did or did not like his job, and whether or not he thought the job was suited to his nature and abilities. The interviewer may also enquire whether the employee has already gotten another job, if that job is better than the one he is leaving, and if so, how much better. It is to be expected that people will occasionally make small improvements in their position by changing jobs, but if an individual secures a very large or substantial advancement by taking a new job, it would appear that the first company has something wrong with its placement or promotional procedures.

Company training can be checked by such inquiries as: "Have you managed to improve yourself while working with us?" "Have you gained any valuable experience?" "Have you learned anything?"

EXIT INTERVIEW

Name _____ Source _____ Date Hired _____ Date Terminated _____

Job _____ Div. _____ Supv. _____ Present Salary _____ Lad. _____

Other jobs held in company _____

Aptitude Test Scores: 1B _____ LM _____

Performance rating:

Reason for leaving, as stated by employee's immediate supervisor:

Reason for leaving, as stated by employee:

What suggestions or criticisms can he make on the following aspects of TIAA employment:

Working Conditions (hours, ventilation, light, etc.)

Salary

Company policies (vacation, absence and tardiness procedures, etc.)

Employee facilities (lunchroom, restrooms, washrooms, club, etc.)

Employee benefits

Supervision

Training

Opportunities — promotional

Opportunities — to develop and utilize skills or ability

If leaving to accept another position:

Where

Nature of Business

Nature of job

Benefits

Hours

Opportunities for advancement

Salary — initial and future

Re-employment: Would TIAA rehire? _____   Would he work here again? _____

In what capacity? _____   Would he recommend TIAA to others? _____

Comments:

Date _____   Signed _____

Fig. 19—An Exit Interview Blank. (Teachers Insurance & Annuity Association)

Working conditions can be examined by questioning: "How did you get along with the other workers?" "Did you always have the materials that you needed?" "Were you satisfied with the kind of tools provided you?"

The complaint and grievance procedures can be looked into with such questions as: "How do you like our company?" "How long have you thought of leaving, and why didn't you complain about conditions?" "Did you ever have any complaints that weren't satisfied?" "Do you have any complaints now?"

Supervision can be weighed in the balance by investigating a number of points. First, perhaps, the interviewer should distinguish clearly, in case of discharge, whether it is related to discipline or inefficiency. A disciplinary discharge is much more apt to indicate some weakness in supervision than is a discharge for inefficiency. This distinction can be followed up with such a question as: "would you like to work for the same foreman again, either in our shop or somewhere else?" "If you come back later on, would you care to work in the same department?"

Finally the interviewer will look for information to throw light on general conditions and company policies. "Would you advise someone else to work here?" "Is it a matter of money?" "Don't you like the town?" "What is your reason for being dissatisfied with your future in our company?" Although the particular kind of information to be sought in a particular exit interview must, of course, be determined by the interviewer, the subjects given above would usually be covered in all cases.

Saving Good Employees for the Company.—Good employees may be on the exit line for a number of reasons. Possibly they have chosen to leave, or some mistake has been made by management. The best procedure for retaining them is to ask questions that make them stop and think, together with a friendly offer to examine the situation. Some questions which could be asked are: "Have you considered the expense of moving?" "Are you improving yourself by leaving?" "Do

you think you will advance more rapidly somewhere else?"
When he comes to this question, the interviewer will want to
compare the worker's present condition with the one he is
going to, and he must search for all the possibilities of in-
creasing satisfaction in his present job. In doing this and
particularly in making suggestions regarding the present job,
the interviewer must listen carefully and watch closely all the
reactions of the employee. If the man shows any interest,
the interviewer can go on to describe opportunities of all kinds
within the company and how they can be obtained. Fre-
quently, he will find that the employee was ignorant of many
opportunities that were right at hand.

Parting with Good Will.—If the interviewer has managed
to solve the difficulties and retain the employee on the payroll,
he has done a good deal for employee morale and good will.
A friendly ending to the interview is all that is called for. In
cases, however, in which the employee is still determined to
leave, as well as in those in which no attempt was made to
retain him, the interviewer can offer his services in vocational
advice or in obtaining another job. As a general rule the in-
terviewer will know a good deal about job requirements, job
training, and job opportunities, not only in his own plant,
but also in the community and even throughout the State.
His constant daily interviewing with applicants and workmen
gives him this information. In consequence it is often very
easy for the interviewer—who is familiar also with the record
of the employee—to make useful suggestions as to where he
may go for another job. He may suggest to him how he may
complete his training, or, on occasion, even discuss with him
his strong and weak points and how he can apply his talents
profitably in another situation. Some companies go even
further than this and offer recommendations, and even tele-
phone calls to other companies, in order to help place a
worthy person. Probably there is no way in which good will
can be so rapidly created as in helping a person to find a
necessary and desirable job.

Procedures of the Exit Interview.—Possibly the first step is to make sure that an exit interview will be held. This is determined in some companies by making out a clearance statement, originating with the foreman and signed by the personnel department, before the worker can get his pay.

Since the exit interview often starts with an employee who is angry with the company, or his boss, the interviewer must woo him away from this anger and get him to talk descriptively and intelligently about the situation he is in. This requires a person who is experienced in interviewing and who can win the employee's respect. Partly with this factor of experience in mind, it is frequently suggested that exit interviewing should be done by the employee counselor, when there is one. Because the counselor will have heard the troubles and difficulties of a good many individuals in similar situations, and because he knows the company thoroughly, he is the logical man to hold this interview. Whether or not there is a counseling interviewer to do the job, however, the exit interviewer should clearly be independent of the man's supervisor. The supervisor and employee who is leaving have worked together for some time, and it is frequently because they have failed to make a success together in their work that an exit interview is called for.

Since exit interviews are nearly always scheduled in advance, they can be carefully prepared for. The interviewer should know everything possible about the employee and his personal problems. He should have examined his record with the company, and he should have a complete report from the supervisor, or department head, detailing the present problem. Armed with this background material the interviewer will arrange that the exit interview be held in private, for this is another situation where people will not talk when eavesdropping is possible. Some say, however, that the interview should not be held in the personnel office. The atmosphere may be too formal there, and the workman may feel ill at ease. It is often desirable, if a private corner can be found, to hold the exit interview in the shop, or near it, amid familiar

surroundings. In addition to the technique, the interviewer must interest himself personally in the employee's situation and really want to know what the cause of the separation is. To be effective this interest must be sincere, and the interviewer must be ready to listen while the man tells his story in his own words perhaps at some length.

A series of steps can be given for the interview as follows: (1) Begin with general conversation of almost any kind. Commenting on some of the good aspects of the employee's record is often an effective way. (2) Bring up the subject of the separation and ask the man to tell his story. Let him tell it in his own words. (3) Question for particular facts that must be known. If the man has not given co-operation up to this point, a little stress may be carefully applied by challenging questions. "What's the matter, Joe, taking a rest?" "Lucky boy to have a vacation. Must have saved a lot of money." The interviewer must, however, avoid getting into an argument. He does this by a continual effort to define the man's problem accurately in terms of questions. "Would you say, John, that you are leaving because the other employees didn't like you and wouldn't give you a fair chance?" Observe the response carefully, and modify the statement or question till it wins acceptance and satisfies both interviewer and interviewee. "As I understand it, John, you are leaving because the foreman wouldn't let you work with your friends, but insisted you join a group you didn't care for?" When the problem is stated so that the interviewer and employee are satisfied with it, some action should be agreed upon. Either it will be agreed that under the circumstances it is best that the employee leave the company, or it will be agreed to take some action that will retain him on the payroll. When this action is decided upon, the interview should end with a little favorable comment of some kind. Congratulating the man on keeping his head and remaining in the company, or offering him best wishes in his new endeavors, and reminding him of one or two things he was praised for in the job he is leaving, will accomplish this.

The Post-Exit Interview

A post-exit interview is held only when the employee has walked away from the job without allowing any chance for a regular exit interview. The purposes and procedures will be the same as in the regular exit interview, but it is worthy of attention because sometimes, when an individual has attained the security of a position with another company and a little time has elapsed, he will speak more freely and frankly than is usually the case in the exit interview. His responses in this interview, or on a confidential form he is asked to fill out, or even over the telephone may give clues to the real reason he resigned his position with the firm.

Chapter 20

THE COUNSELING INTERVIEW

Counseling is interviewing with the primary purpose of benefiting the interviewee. Everyone has problems, be they only those connected with taxes and thoughts of approaching death. With some people, however, problems bear down so hard that they cannot be solved without help.

These difficulties are endless in variety. A workman is unduly sensitive and has been made the butt of jokes or is distressed lest someone learn of a hidden incident in his past. Another is worried because sickness at home or some other increased expenditure leaves him unable to meet his financial obligations. Still another has made some suggestion to the company that was not accepted and feels hurt by the apparent neglect. Another is isolated and without friends, but does not know what to do about it.

Let us take the case of the individual who, though once a good worker, had of late become nervous, irritable, and apparently, very much discouraged. His output had been slowly falling off for some time. When asked if he would like an interview, he accepted with neither eagerness nor resistance. In the interview he reported that he was very much disturbed about his wife. She had developed a fear of the weather so overpowering that she ran to the neighbor's house whenever there was rain or wind. Their three year old child was learning her fears, and things were rather bad at home. On invitation, the wife came for an interview at the plant. She reported that ever since she was married she had lived in an apartment house belonging to her mother-in-law. The rent was very low, but the neighborhood was very bad, and her husband did not believe they could afford to move. She said she would like to go to work. She had worked before marriage, and had a

381

sister who would take care of her child while she was away. Her income added to her husband's would enable them to live in a more suitable neighborhood. But all the relatives were opposed, saying she wasn't strong enough to work. She thought she was.

The counselor suggested that if her husband agreed with her about her working, they should do as they thought best, even if the other relatives didn't approve. The man and his wife agreed together that it was a good idea that she should go to work and said they would try it. After six months, the man was doing good work again and reported that everything was working out all right.

All such emotional problems cause tensions and the expenditure of energy in wasteful agitation. They are fatiguing and prevent the individual from giving himself to his work. In helping to solve such problems therefore, the interviewer provides a real service to the company by increasing output and reducing costs.

Depending upon the firm, the employee counselor may render quite a variety of services. He may, for example, assist an employee in making out his income tax or counsel another who has a vocational problem and wants a transfer to another department or some extra training, either from the firm or on the outside. The counselor may introduce a new employee to his associates or salvage a departing employee, or at least his good-will. He keeps in close contact with supervisors, safety men, nurses, and others who know many employees. He arranges to interview any worker who needs assistance in making suitable living or social arrangements, who is having difficulty in making friends in the plant, whose conduct or attitudes are making difficulties for him, or who has emotional problems.

Industrial counseling can be examined from several points of view. Here we will study it from five different aspects. (1) What advantage is there to the employee in being counseled? (2) What profit does the firm gain by providing employee counseling? (3) What kind of counseling or interviewing program is required? (4) What special attributes are looked

for in the interviewer? (5) How is the counseling interview conducted?

Advantages of Counseling to the Employee.—We have already observed that everyone has problems and that some people are unsuccessful in solving these problems by themselves. Below is a classified list of the general types of problem the employee is apt to present to the counselor.

1. Work and working conditions:
     Cannot find a place in the working group; is avoided by other workers.
     Feels he is in the wrong job; has been offered more pay elsewhere.
     Lack of opportunity; progress has been too slow.
     Is younger or older than his work-mates.
     Foreman or supervisor trouble. (Must be handled very skilfully.)
     Has been transferred; feels insecure.

2. Off-the-job time:
     Is isolated and without friends.
     Has no hobbies, few interests; is bored.
     Lives in an area where there are limited recreations.
     Feels he does not have the funds to live normally.
     Is dissatisfied with transportation or traveling time.

3. Family relationships:
     No companionship at home.
     Broken home; divorce, separation, severe illness or death in the family.
     Worries over difficulties with children.
     Jealousy and friction at home.
     Family withholds approval.
     Bad home neighborhood or home conditions.
     Day care of children.

4. Personality difficulties:
     Unhappy, morose; poor mental health.
     Emotionally immature; irresponsible, unrealistic.

Not well adjusted; too inhibited, too unconventional.

Poorly integrated; tries to do everything at once, lacks plans.

5. Health:

Is deformed, lame, or has sight, hearing, or speech defect.

Is noticeably oversized or undersized.

Is ugly or unattractive.

Has no vigor or "pep."

Halitosis and body odors.

6. Training difficulties:

Needs more training; doesn't know what.

Wants more specific training; doesn't know how to get it.

Has enrolled for training and is failing.

Needs training, but doesn't know it.

7. Social problems:

Sex perversions or difficulties.

Being in love; or disappointed in love.

Rebellion against authority.

Heavy drinking.

Discourtesy.

Racial prejudices.

Cheating, lying, stealing.

Financial problems—garnishees, difficulties with installment payments.

Housing problems.

Federal employees in the larger cities [1] presented the following eight types of problems to their counselors, listed here in descending order of frequency:

1. Housing
2. Budgeting and finances
3. Adjustment to job
4. Adjustment to community
5. Health

[1] "A Guide to Personnel Counseling," *Personnel*, XX, No 3, (1943), 139-53.

6. Family problems
7. Emotional and mental disturbances
8. Legal aid and insurance

The People Who Have the Problems.—Since everyone, everywhere, has problems, why not let the employee alone in solving his? In other words:

> Never trouble trouble
> 'Til trouble troubles you
> For you'll only hurry trouble
> And trouble others too.

This little rhyme would seem to give good advice, and most firms with counseling experience follow it. As long as an employee does good work and successfully manages his own affairs, these affairs are left to the employee. No paternalistic surveillance is intended in a counseling program.

Although employment does not involve co-operation to the degree involved in marriage, it is somewhat true that the health and efficiency of either partner in the worker-management situation is felt by the other. When an employee is worried or unhappy, or poorly adjusted to his associates, his work output is sure to suffer. The company might fire the man, but this is expensive both in community good will and in the cost of selecting and training someone to take his place, in which case there still is no assurance that the new man will be better than the first. The second man may, in fact, develop problems that are harder to solve than those of the first.

It is an old bromide, but still true, and still somewhat shocking to consider, that "half the employees are below average." No matter what employment methods are used, this simple statistical fact will always remain true. One half of the employees in any firm are always less efficient and less able than the other half. There are different classes of labor, it is true, and some firms may be able to make a better selection from the population as a whole than some others, because of the work they do and the wages they pay. But when the average is higher it usually follows that the requirements are higher too, and the life the employees lead more complex.

A second way of emphasizing that people are unequal in their abilities and opportunities is to observe the proportion who obtain a good education When Harvard University's Educational Committee made their report,[2] they approximated the percentage of the population that had completed the following school grades

> Sixth grade, 90-95 per cent of the age group
> Tenth grade, 60 per cent of the age group
> Twelfth grade, 45 per cent of the age group
> Second year of college, 15 per cent of the age group
> Fourth year of college, 7 per cent of the age group

Obviously, among the employees of any firm are people who are handicapped because they have less experience, intelligence, or education than many of the other employees There may be other handicapping factors such as illness or lack of money The productivity of many of these underprivileged individuals can always be raised by a little wise counseling in their time of need

Another situation that is often found is that of the person of great ability but still greater problems One such case is that of a man whose IQ was 145 (approximately one and a half times that of the ordinary person) Largely because his father had committed suicide, he had never had much supervision as a child and did not get much of an education When grown, he felt out of place, accepted a war job opportunity, and learned the trade of toolmaker He still however, could not adjust to his working associates and way of life, and, in a state of despondency went deeply into debt When he came for counseling, his problems seemed to him beyond managing

In contrast to this disheartening data there are the lives of other half of the population One half are above the average in intelligence One half have more than the average amount of education, and one half either have less than the usual number of emotional problems or have managed to solve them From these more fortunate individuals, counselors may

be selected and trained to help the less fortunate workers adjust to circumstances and solve their problems.

The primary advantage of the counseling interview to the employee is that, instead of being turned away when his problems become too much for him, and left to stumble along by himself, he is given a little help. Instead of losing his job, his time, and his seniority rating in a search for another job with another firm, where he would probably fail again, he is kept at work and given a little aid. Experience indicates that this little bit of help is often enough. Not every employee who needs and receives counseling can be salvaged, it is true, but a great many can.

Employees who have been helped out of their difficulties usually become extra-loyal employees. They are apt to tell their friends of the benefit they have received. Instead of being turned out into the labor market and eventually hampering some other firm, or being allowed to remain where they are as unproductive workers, they become profitable employees.

Profits to the Firm from Employee Counseling.—From the previous discussion it would be obvious that the firm gains directly in the higher work output of well-adjusted employees. Moreover, since well-adjusted people are better team mates and working companions, the group morale is almost certain to be improved. Better morale contributes to a good working spirit and output goes up from the extra contribution of others beside those who were counseled. Just as a trouble-maker in a group can spread dissatisfaction and lessen the production of others, so the well satisfied can be centers of good feeling and morale strength. But counseling renders other services to management than the greater production of those involved.

The counseling staff usually fulfills a number of functions. These are enumerated in the following list:

1. The counselor is often able to be of great service to the supervisors. Even though much of the information he has learned is confidential, a good deal of it can be objectified and generalized, and given to the supervisors either directly, or in

their conferences. Sometimes, upon explicit permission from the employee involved and when it would aid in solving a problem, even ordinarily confidential information is given to the supervisors. Such reports often give the foreman and supervisors a new point of view in regard to their assistants and frequently improve the supervisor's skill in handling his men.

2. Data from the counselor's files are sure to provide good suggestions in case a company survey of employee attitudes is proposed.

3. The counselor's files are also a source of valuable material that can be given in training courses for supervisors and foremen.

4. The counselor gathers and correlates for use by all employees, information on the community—its medical and health, and financial and legal services, cultural opportunities, recreational resources, transportation, and housing. He also integrates in-plant services with community agencies.

5. Through his referrals to community agencies and his exchange of information and work with these agencies, the employee counselor does much public relations work for the company. An able counselor can build community good will for the company.

It can be seen from the above statements that counseling is a somewhat complex function that can bring a variety of benefits to the company. There is one factor, however, that must be recognized. The values of counseling cannot be measured each week and entered on a balance sheet. Any company that sponsors a counseling program must ponder the old proverb, "Scatter thy bread upon the waters for it will return to you after many days." Companies that have tried counseling over a considerable period of time, as did the Hawthorne Plant of the General Electric Company,[3] nearly always find that it pays.

---

[3] George C Homans, "Western Electric Researches," in S. D. Hoslett, (ed.), *Human Factors in Management* (Parkville, Mo.: Park College Press, 1946), p 152.

What kind of Counseling Program is Required?—Counseling is usually considered a service function and centered in the personnel office. This service has been developed and operated most frequently by management, but to be successful, counseling must win the confidence and support of all the employees. In a union plant it must have the support of the union.

When counseling is provided by the union, as it has been in some cases, it must be kept sharply separate from other union activities including the grievance procedures. If management and the union offer counseling as a joint activity they should insure their separate interests by sharing the financial responsibility.

In setting up a counseling program, considerable care should be taken to avoid overlapping and interference with the safety, health, or any other program. No collective bargaining agreement should be impaired, nor should the counselor undermine the functions of any other person. In the few cases where counseling programs have run into trouble, the most frequent complaint has been some friction between the counselor and the line supervisor. This relationship is a most important one and should be clearly defined. The supervisor has direct responsibility in all matters relating to the job and the workman's duties. The counselor takes over in matters of the workman's social relationships with other workmen, with the community, and with the firm as a whole. The counselor should get to know the supervisor personally, and cultivate a confidence and common understanding with him.

It is usually recommended that there be one counselor to every three to five hundred employees, depending upon the conditions and services rendered.[4] On the average it appears better to have men counselors for men and women counselors for women. Well-trained women, are often successful in counseling men, and the older "fatherly type" man may be successful in counseling women. A person should never counsel anyone over whom he has authority nor anyone he has previously known on a personal basis.

[4] Homans, op. cit., pp. 205-15.

Where the employees are sufficiently centralized, it is desirable to have one central reception room for counseling, with a separate small office for each counselor. Where separate offices for the counselors are not available, it is necessary, at least, to have enough room so that there cannot be eavesdropping from the desk of one interviewer to the next. Privacy is probably more important in counseling than in any other type of personnel interviewing. Where employees are widely scattered, interviewing offices can be located according to the needs of the personnel. Counselors should always be easily available at all working hours, including evening and night shifts.

Some companies provide a brief "emergency interview" at the receiving desk to determine if the desire for an interview is caused by some emergency need that can be met without much discussion. The advance of a few dollars until payday is an example of such a quick adjustment.

When the counselor receives the employee, usually by appointment, he should have already consulted all available information concerning him from his personnel card. The average time for a counseling interview can be placed at about forty-five minutes, although there is a rather wide deviation to this average. Some interviews are completed quickly; some run longer than an hour.

In private practice outside of industry, psychiatrists, with a somewhat similar interview, usually fix the time at about fifty-five minutes for each appointment, and then allow an indefinite number of interviews. Some believe that a time-limited interview has an advantage because a subject who knows that he has only a certain amount of time often makes better use of it. But the nature of the interviews varies so much in industry that such a procedure has not proved practical. In addition, if an employee's problem is not solved after three to five interviews, it is frequently thought better to refer him to some outside agency. Industrial counselors are not psychiatrists nor psychoanalysts, and cannot presume to handle the more deeply involved cases.

To insure the success of the program there should be some in-plant publicity. House organs and bulletin boards can be used to explain the program to the workers. Often there are unofficial but key employees who take an interest and help a good deal with the work. Frequently the counselors also attend group meetings of supervisors. Here, while they pass on generalized information regarding employee attitudes and working conditions, they also have an opportunity to explain and promote the use of the counseling service. The foremen and supervisors are urged to suggest the use of this service to their workers, and to use counseling themselves when they have problems with their working force. To help supervisors to know what to look for, they may be given a list of "symptoms" such as the following:

1. An increase in the number of mistakes and spoiled work.
2. Short temper, irritability, worry, nervousness.
3. Increased absenteeism; clock watching by some one who was a good worker.
4. Absentmindedness and preoccupation.
5. Lack of energy, fatigue, pain, health complaints in someone previously healthy.
6. Any noticeable undesirable change in behavior.

Important management and union officials also should back the program to make it most effective. As in many other situations, satisfied customers give the best recommendations.

Special Attributes Required in Counseling Interviewers.— From the preceding statements it will be apparent that the counseling interviewer must have a great deal of ability if his work is to be done as well as it can be done. Probably the best way to determine what these abilities should be is to return to the principles of interviewing and examine them in relation to the job description we have looked over.

First, the counselor must treat as persons, individuals of a variety of racial backgrounds, economic status, and economic achievements, most of whom have some problem that is disturbing them. To do this—**to treat all these people as "ends**

in themselves"—the counselor must have much human sympathy and liking for people. It will often appear to him that the problem presented to him was created of selfishness, ignorance, and stupidity; yet he must treat each individual as somebody worth-while.

The second, and perhaps the most important requirement of the counselor, is the job of orientation. It is his task to help orient or re-orient people, in regard to their own problems, the firm they work for, and the community they live in. We have already found that the most basic requirement of orientation is a thorough grasp of the problem in which orientation is required.

It would seem that a person would always have the greatest acquaintance possible with his own problems and that no one else could possibly add to his personal store of information. But we need only to remember that half of the people are below average in intelligence; half are below average in education, and half of the people have more than the average lot of emotional problems—these three halves, of course, being obtained by a different sectioning of the whole. From these facts we may derive three of the necessary attributes in an industrial counselor: emotional maturity, intelligence, and education.

In order to re-orient people helpfully toward a solution of their personal problems, the counselor should be someone who has successfully mastered his own emotional problems. That is, he should be well adjusted, emotionally mature, and mentally healthy. He must never take advantage of people in their emotional distress or become personally involved in their problems through listening to them. The counselor must be above average in emotional balance and personal adjustment.

The counselor should also be above the average in intelligence. He will be presented with all kinds of emergencies and "new problems" in quite an endless variety. It would be like turning an elephant loose in a china shop to give a person of inferior ability the privilege of examining into people's problems, probing into their difficulties, or suggesting remedies.

The counselor should also have a better than average education. He benefits a great deal from having had training in psychology, sociology, and economics. He will need at times to recognize symptoms of emotional disorders, and he should know enough psychology to understand what a sound emotional adjustment is. Some knowledge of hygiene will help the counselor understand whether workers are living beyond their physiological bank accounts. Sociology will help him understand the community and the subgroups within the plant. Whatever experience and additional reading and study the counselor can add to his basic education, the better. He is in a field that has no "top." He will be able to use all the intelligence, understanding, and knowledge of human problems he can muster.

The counselor must also orient or re-orient the worker with respect to his functions in the plant. Before the interviewing counselor can help the employee with problems that arise out of his work in the plant, he must, of course, have a thorough knowledge of the whole organization. This involves an understanding of the people, the workers' privileges and obligations, the personnel and other management policies, and the kind of work done. Let us examine these four points.

Workers usually constitute some kind of a group. Perhaps they have a racial or national bias, or are mostly of one religion. They may be predominantly of one educational level, or be all "Dodger Fans," or have any other "coloring." They may be predominantly a family type group. The counselor should know all these generalities about the people he works for.

Employee privileges relate to vacations, sick leave, grievance procedures, and, in some cases, a few permitted absences for shopping. Obligations of employees may involve payment of personal debts, guarding of confidential information, the use of passes, and the like.

The counselor should be familiar with all the policy statements and thoroughly understand their import. He should know what collective bargaining agreements are in force. He must have full information regarding leaves, transfers, effi-

ciency ratings, and promotions. He must know all about retirement pensions, if any, disability compensation, and separation notices. The counselor should also have a basic knowledge of the work done by the individuals he counsels. He need not be an expert, but any indication of gross ignorance in regard to materials, processes, or machines is apt to cost him the confidence of the worker.

The counselor must also orient or re-orient the worker in the community. Again we have a requirement for knowledge, this time knowledge of the community. Many problems extend out into the employee's home life and social activities and such problems cannot be solved without adequate information. The principal types of knowledge called for here are in regard to housing, transportation, recreational activities, eating, shopping, and the securing of financial, legal, or medical advice. In order to have this information, the counselor will usually contact civic groups such as churches, the Visiting Nurse Association, the Y.M.C.A., the Community Chest Council, the Board of Education, and similar groups, depending upon the community.

Procedures for the Counseling Interviewer.—The counseling interview is probably a misnomer; it would be better represented in the plural, or "counseling interviews." The problems presented are too varied to be taken care of in one standard type of interview.

It will help in understanding these interviews, however, to state a general purpose for them all. The interviewer will sometimes emphasize one aspect of this purpose in his approach sometimes another. The general purpose, however, might be given as aiding employees to solve their own problems and developing enough self-understanding to solve their future problems by themselves. This general purpose may be said to have four aspects:

1. To encourage the immediate release of tension in the employee by encouraging him to express himself completely and without restraint.
2. To identify and clarify the employee's problem.

3. To re-orient the employee in regard to himself and his problems; that is, help him to a more complete insight and self-understanding.

4. Sponsor and expedite the employee's decision and subsequent activity.

Many individuals will come to the counselor in a hostile mood. Some particular incident, some person, or the world in general has gotten them into a hostile temper. Their blood pressure is high and their good humor low; they are more ready to fight than to reason. In such cases, the interviewer usually encourages the man to get his troubles off his chest. He tells the man that it is good for him to express himself completely; that he can safely go ahead and "blow his top," for every remark will be held in the strictest confidence. No restraint is put upon any type of comment. The counselor attempts to open the flood gates and let the resentment and bad feeling run out.

After such an interview, many employees go back to work in a much better mood. With their tensions reduced, they can begin to reason, to put their minds on their work, and co-operate with others. If their difficulties are not solved, they will always be given, at this stage, a definite appointment for another interview when their problem will be analysed further.

In identifying and clarifying the workers' problem, the counselor will often help the individual state the nature of his problem and classify it. All problems are said to fall into one of three kinds; clarification, and thereby solution, is expedited by determining which kind of problem it is. The categories of problem are:

1. Problems of definition: "Is this situation good or bad?" "Is this action wise or unwise?" "Should I buy a home of my own or continue to rent?" Here the problem is that of determining goals and ends.

2. "How-to-do-it" problems, when the goal is clear. "How can I raise one thousand dollars for the down payment on a home?"

3. The problem of explaining something that has already

taken place: "How did I get myself into the fix I am in—without a penny in the bank?"

In attempting to aid the employees develop self-knowledge and sound orientation, there are several approaches. One of these is to explore with the person his past history. Everyone is dominated to a marked degree by his past, but is often unconscious of it. Very often a person continues to operate on the basis of a decision made when he was a child, with a childish understanding of circumstances. The interviewer often invites the employee to form an adult (he may say objective) evaluation upon some incident, resolution, or opinion. He attempts to search out and indicate to the employee how he has been influenced by particular incidents of his past experience. In the second place, the counselor may review with an individual his reactions to his environment. A "chain reaction" of stimuli is always centered in a person's environment and may be influencing him far more than he knows. Again, the interviewer may examine with the employee his inventory of talents, and examine with him how well he has used his personal abilities. By various approaches of this kind, he helps the person build up a better understanding of himself.

In sponsoring and expediting the employee's decisions, the counselor will use either the facilities at his command within the company, or those he has knowledge of in the community. He seldom, if ever, takes the responsibility for the action that is to be undertaken. The choice is that of the employee, and he should always retain full responsibility for determining it. The counselor, however, will always praise a wise decision and encourage sound action.

As we have indicated, these various facets or aspects of the counseling purpose will be carried out in different types of interviews. Usually these interviews can be classified as one of four kinds: (1) simple directive, (2) case history type, (3) co-operative, and (4) nondirective.

Simple Directive.—When an employee asks for help in filling out his income tax or in finding a suitable house to live

in, the problem is a simple one of expediting a decision already made. In this case the interviewer will usually save time by going about the interview in a simple directive way. That is, he will directly ask the questions he wants answered and will not hesitate much in making suggestions, provided, of course, that he has the necessary information at hand with which to solve the problem.

The Case History Type.—A case history type of interview is one in which the employee cannot present all the factors essential to a solution, and in which knowledge of these factors can be learned from other people. One boy, for instance, had been working for less than a year when he went to his supervisor and claimed that a group of young hoodlums were "ganging up on him" after work and interfering with his walk home. He had been twice beaten, he said, and once, when he was out skating on a Sunday, this gang of young fellows had taken away his shoes and skates and left him to walk home barefooted through the snow. In such a case, the counselor is likely to feel that he wants to hear the other side of the story, and know something of the background the employee came from. In this case, contact was made with the boy's school principal of the previous year, his boy scout leader of several years back, and his home. It was learned that being considerably over-age for his class he had "broken-out" of high school and had been asked to resign from the boy scouts some years previous to that for misbehavior. He was carrying on a feud with a group of boys who had been more successful in those organizations. It appeared that the young man who had complained was the most active one in the feud, and that the other boys were ready to drop it provided he "laid off" smaller boys in their groups.

This is still, to quite some extent, a directed interview. The counselor put together all the background information in regard to the boy and had a talk with him. He explained to him that in nagging the smaller boys he was compensating, to some extent, for his own failures. The interviewer further told him that the older boys would leave him alone if he

would leave the smaller ones alone. And finally, a training program in the plant was suggested to him. He was shown that, if he attended to business, he need not envy anyone but could make a reputation and earn a good pay check for himself right there in the plant. The boy eagerly grasped the opportunity for the training program, and asked a good many questions about how he could learn more and advance in the company as he grew older.

The Co-operative Interview.—The co-operative counseling interview is one in which part of the information is provided by the interviewee and part by the counselor. An example is the case of H. S., a young man who asked for an interview at his supervisor's suggestion.

The interviewer greeted the young worker, invited him to sit down, and asked him what was on his mind.

"That's the trouble, right there," said the employee, "I haven't got anything on my mind. I'm bored stiff most of the time."

"So you don't find life very interesting?" responded the interviewer.

"No," replied H.S. "In the evening I listen to all the classical music on the radio, but there isn't much, and that's all I am interested in."

"So you're not interested in anything but classical music."

"That's right. My mother was interested in music, and I learned it from her. I have no other interests."

"Well," said the counselor, "let's work this out together. You tell me all about yourself and what you can do, and I will tell you all about the different opportunities in this company, and in the town."

So H. S. related that he came from Shreveport, Alabama. His mother died when he was quite young, and all he could remember was that she was fond of music. His father kept H. S. in a foster home and paid his expenses but gave him no attention nor any extra privileges. He grew up without many friends and without being able to get into many of the school games and activities. He never felt like stepping into things.

He began to feel that life was for other people, and that he was there merely to look on and listen in. Then he had come north to a factory town and had to work to earn his own living. Nothing tasted good, looked good, seemed interesting; that was all. He was apathetic.

"How would you like to take some tests?" asked the counselor. "That will give us a chance to find out what your abilities really are. Perhaps you could take part in some of these games you have been looking in on and have some real fun." In the meantime the counselor told H. S. that the plant had an amateur orchestra and were very much in need of a drummer, that there was a volleyball club, and that in a town not far away there was a Y.M.C.A. swimming pool.

H. S. agreed to take the tests, so another interview was scheduled when they would consider the results of the tests.

In the second interview, it appeared that H. S. had made contact with the orchestra and was interested in learning to play the drums. Volleyball didn't appeal to him, nor did he care to swim.

The tests indicated that H. S. was above average in intelligence but deficient for his age level in most subjects of formal training. He also had reasonably good sense of rhythm and finger dexterity, and was quite proficient in mechanical ability.

The counselor discussed the scores with H. S. and asked him if he would like to transfer from the work he was doing rather poorly to that of a toolmaker's apprentice.[5] H. S. accepted the transfer because he liked mechanical work, and toolmaking gave him a more definite objective than he had yet had. H. S. did not feel that his problems were all solved, however, and asked if he could come back later for another interview. The interview was put far enough in advance so that H. S. would have some idea of how he liked his transfer.

In the next interview, H. S. reported that everything was going rather well. He was playing the drums for the orchestra, and he liked his transfer. But he still was bothered with a

_____

[5] It should be pointed out that it is not considered good policy to attempt to solve too many problems with transfers.

feeling that he was on the side lines. He confessed that he had always had a longing to be, for once, the center of interest.

"What kind of a man do you admire?" asked the counselor.

"I've always admired strong, hearty people with lots of self-confidence."

After glancing over his files and thinking a bit, the counselor came up with a suggestion. "How would you like to join a weight-lifting club? We have some of the best weight lifters in the country right here in this town, and I think we can easily make arrangements for you to join the group."

H. S. was interested. He confessed that he had always wanted to be unusually strong. Was it possible?

The counselor replied that the weight-lifters would give their own account of themselves. He would be very glad to arrange an introduction.

The interview described above is a co-operative one in that very definite contributions of information were made by both parties. The counselor did not wait for the interviewee to discover for himself what he needed to end his boredom. Using his knowledge of human nature, of the plant, and of the community, he made suggestions. He did not attempt to decide for H. S. or force any of his own suggestions. When H. S. showed no interest in the swimming pool or volleyball, the counselor dropped those topics and continued his analysis for other suitable interests.

The Nondirective Counseling Interview.—The nondirective interview is one in which it is assumed that all information needed to solve the problem is within the interviewee's mind. What is needed is a re-evaluation of this information, a new self-knowledge from a different perspective. Unless he is absolutely adamant in his determination to be nondirective, the interviewer may occasionally drop a hint of environmental or plant opportunities, but his principal task in this kind of interview will be to re-orient the interviewee in his own knowledge of himself by listening to him and retelling him in new words the ideas he has already expressed.

The following is a very simple example of a nondirective interview.

COUNSELOR: Won't you come in and sit down?

M.M.: Yes, I will thank you.

COUNSELOR: Is there anything I can do for you?

M.M.: Well, to tell you the truth, I don't know whether there is or not. I just don't see my way ahead, and I thought I'd like to talk to somebody.

COUNSELOR: You feel as though it would clear your mind to talk things over with somebody?

M.M.: Yes, that's right. You see I've been kind of discouraged lately. Seems to me like I'm behind the eight ball.

COUNSELOR: You've been feeling pretty discouraged.

M.M.: Yes, you see it's this way. When I was a young fellow, I got a chance to go into a small carpet cleaning factory. Me and another fellow did it together. Well, I worked at that for seventeen years. I always thought we would make a real go of it, but we never did. Oh yes, I thought for a long time that I ought to get out of it, but I never had the guts to do it.

COUNSELOR: So you held on to the carpet cleaning factory longer than you should.

M.M.: Yes, you see I was married then, and had two kids. I couldn't see my way clear to change.

COUNSELOR: Your family responsibilities made you hesitate to change.

M.M.: That's right, but that last year I was discouraged all year, and then I heard of this place.

COUNSELOR: That's when you came to work here?

M.M.: That's right. I was thirty-five when I made the change, and I guess I was too old. I haven't got ahead here much, and I'm going on forty now. It's most too late to change again.

COUNSELOR: You are almost forty, and you think that's pretty late to go out looking for another job.

M.M.: That's the way it seems to me. But I wonder why I don't get ahead here any. I wonder if I haven't enough training or something?

COUNSELOR: You've been thinking that lack of training is perhaps the reason you're not getting ahead?

M.M.: That's it. I keep wondering if I couldn't get some kind of training that would go along with all the experience I had in my own business to put me ahead of some of these fellows around here.

COUNSELOR: You feel that if you got the right training and added it to your past experience you could go places.

M.M.: That's it. I was thinking if I knew a little more accounting and got some supervisor training and learned a little more about management, it would make me a more valuable man.

COUNSELOR: You feel that accounting, supervisor training, and something more about management is what you need to know?

M.M.: That's right. I got the catalogues at home too, but I just couldn't think it through, and make up my mind to take the courses.

COUNSELOR: It seems to me your determination to take some more courses is a very good one. I wish you lots of luck with it.

M.M.: I believe you're right. I sort of thought I should take that training, but I wasn't sure.

COUNSELOR: You feel pretty sure now that training is what you need?

M.M.: Yes, it seems perfectly clear now. I sure do appreciate your help.

COUNSELOR: You're quite welcome. If we can be of any more help to you, remember we're always here.

The counselor may do more in expediting a decision than is shown in the above interview, but the theory of this whole procedure is self-discovery, self-reliance, self-responsibility, and self-management by the interviewee. The interviewer stands by, holds up an interview mirror, and says, in effect, "Look at yourself from this point of view, and this one, and this one." In a great many cases, the interviewee makes his own discoveries and his own decision. When he does so, it can be taken for granted that he will want to put his own ideas into action.

The Report of the Counseling Interview.—The flexibility of the counseling interview would be restricted by the requirement of a very formal report. Usually the counselor writes in longhand the essential features that he believes should be recorded, although in some cases, he may attempt to give a verbatim report of the whole interview. Sometimes the information is subjected to an elementary classification into such parts as identifying material, statement of the problem, brief analysis of the problem with measures proposed for solution, and agency contacts and follow-up.

It is a great privilege as well as a great responsibility to do this type of interviewing for it often makes good workers out of what were bad ones, lifts morale, improves co-operation among employees, and pays for itself in greater output.

INDEX OF NAMES

INDEX OF SUBJECTS